

Ethnic trends: Professor accused of stereotyping the successes and failings of races changing the face of British society

Asians emerge as the new moneymakers

JASON BENNETTO

Asians, particularly Indians, are set to become one of the most wealthy, dominant middle-class groups of the future, while Afro-Caribbeans are likely to be part of the inner-city working classes, according to a report published yesterday.

But the study, based on the first national census of the British ethnic population, was yesterday criticised for stereotyping groups after an Oxford professor described Asians in the survey as facing a "Jewish future" and black people an "Irish future".

Among the findings of the study by leading academics is that new ethnic groups are emerging, notably "British blacks", who no longer associate themselves closely with their Caribbean origins, but have developed a new identity.

The 1991 Census, published yesterday by the Office for National Statistics, found that the ethnic minority in Britain is just about 3 million, or 5 per cent of the population.

The largest group is the Indian population at 840,000, followed by the Black-Caribbean population at 500,000 and the Pakistanis with 477,000. There are 212,000 Black-Africans, 163,000 Bangladeshis and 157,000 Chinese. The Irish community, which is not listed separately in the census is believed to more than a million people.

Professor Ceri Peach, head of the social geography department at Oxford University, noted that Asians, particularly Indians and to a lesser extent the Pakistani population, but not the Bangladeshis, were becoming a population who were self-employed, owner-occupiers and white-collar workers, with professional qualifications. But that the Black-Caribbean population appeared to be heading

for a working-class future: waged-labour, state-educated, and council houses-dwellers.

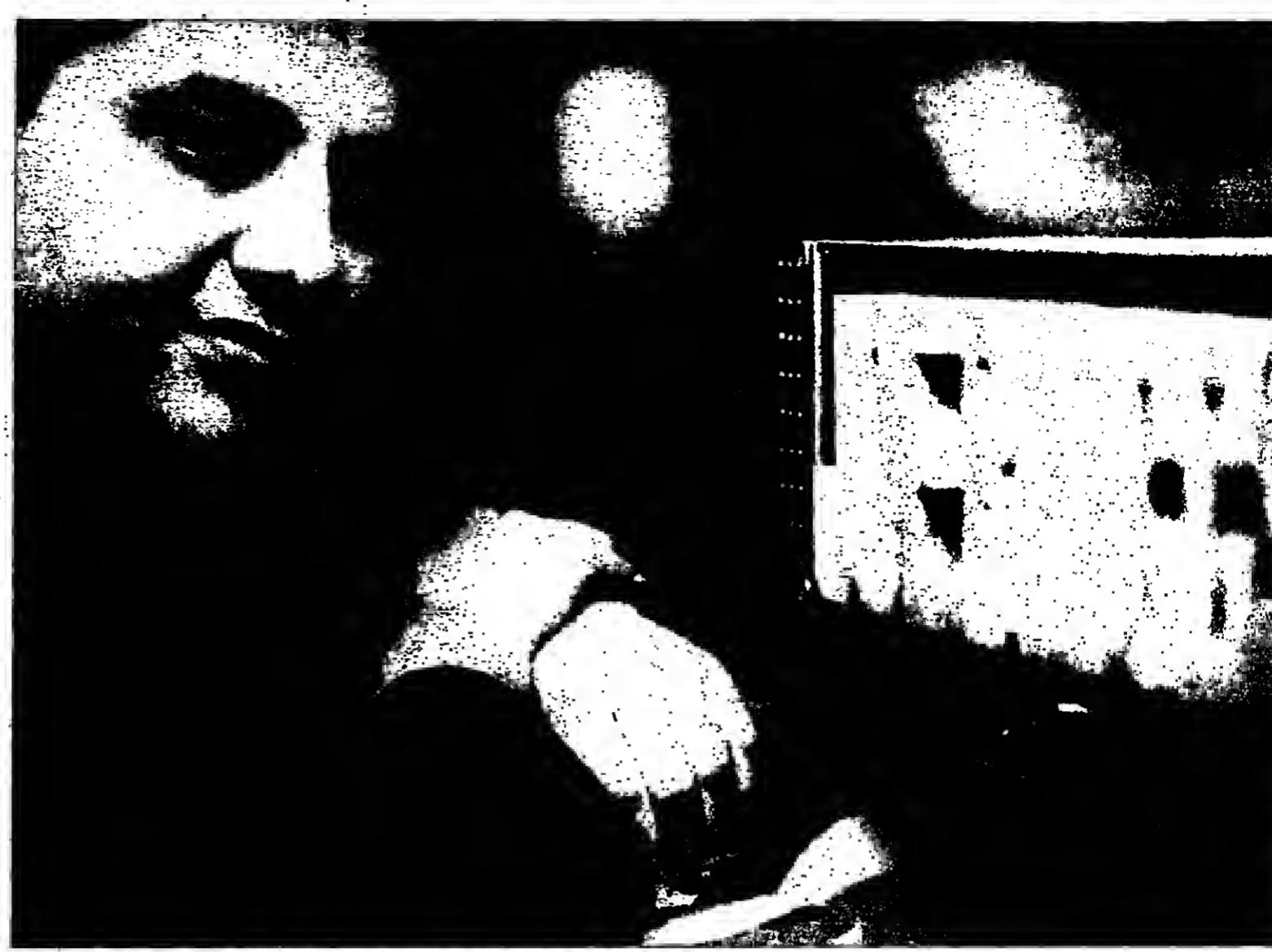
Part of the explanation for the success of the Indian population is the high level of education, success at finding economic independence and the tightening of immigration laws has meant that mainly skilled Indian people have entered Britain since the mid-1970s.

While admitting there was counter evidence for the generalisation, Professor Peach wrote: "One of the most telling summaries of the differences between the Caribbean and Asian settlement in Britain was that the Caribbean's faced what I term an 'Irish future' while the Asians face a 'Jewish future'."

A spokesman for the Commission for Racial Equality described this comment as a "stereotype". Professor Peach replied yesterday: "It might be stereotyping, but I think it conveys the flavour of the generalisation."

In the report Professor Peach also argued that there was now a high level of mixed white and Black-Caribbean households or "marriages" - about one in four - which had helped lead to the emergence of a "Black British identity". This is linked to a decline in the Caribbean population, which rose from about 28,000 in 1951 to a peak of 550,000 in 1971, to about 500,000 in 1991. Since 1984 there have been more "Afro-Caribbean" people born in Britain than in the West Indies.

On the question of education the most qualified groups are the Chinese, Black-African, and Indians, who all have higher achievements than British-born whites. But despite this advantage the study found that "most ethnic minorities are doubly disadvantaged. They have poorer chances of obtaining employment than do British-born whites with similar qualifications



Success story: Shami Ahmed, director of the flourishing Joe Bloggs clothing company based in Manchester

Integrity
hard
work,
sweat
and luck

JAMES CUSICK

There is no great mystique; the secret behind the success of Britain's Asian business moguls is hard work, long hours and a burning desire to succeed.

In the 50 years since the first Asian influx to Britain, Asians have moved on from the old stereotyped image of the struggling corner-shop businessman. There are now more than 300 Asian millionaires among the estimated 1.5 million Asian community in Britain. Their combined buying power is more than £6bn.

Although Asians own half the country's independent shops, their business activities have diversified into most spheres of commerce, ranging from heavy industry to serious property investment. The Census analysis, which forecasts that Asians face a "Jewish future" of being self-employed, owner-occupiers and white-collar workers with professional qualifications, is no surprise to the leading Asian businessmen.

In one of the most recent surveys of Britain's richest 500 people, Dr Swraj Paul, 65, the head of the Caparo steel empire, is estimated to be worth £500m. He came to Britain from India in 1966. Last year he did what would have been unthinkable a few decades ago, when he bought a steel mill in Pennsylvania. Regarded as a "shrewd operator", he lists three key qualities that Asians bring to the market place: "There is no secret, but three things: hard work and being prepared to sweat it out, integrity and luck."

Dr Paul, a close confidant of the shadow Chancellor, Gordon Brown, said: "The Indian is a big saver. He doesn't waste, doesn't spend. And he likes to be self-employed. And success is not for the individual, but for the whole family."

Chambers of Commerce, Masonic Lodges, Round Tables and Lions Clubs in certain areas have become Asian-dominated. There is also the "Durbar Club", a secretive dinner-party set of very rich Asians who back the Conservative Party. Few admit to being members.

Britain's banks have begun to acknowledge the potential of winning Asian business. When many Asians were hurt by the collapse of BCCI in 1990, the major clearing banks were given a chance to step in.

Nirmal Singh, chairman of the Bradford Asian Business Association who runs a quilt and textile business, agrees with Dr Paul. "Hard work, seven days a week" is the secret. Arriving from the Punjab 30 years ago, he says many Indians who owned a small plot of land came to England and only wanted to work for themselves. His own rise, he says, went "slowly, slowly".

Mr Singh's son, Iqbal, soon to qualify as a lawyer, backs up the Census's findings about the next generation of Asians. "He has been to private school, university, is highly ambitious, is a Young Conservative chairman ... this is the kind of opportunity I never had."

Other Asians among Britain's rich elite include Tom Singh, 45, whose New Look fashion retail business, based in Dorset, attracted institutional investors at the beginning of this year to the tune of £170m.

Varying fortunes of Britain's immigrant classes

Some of the main findings of the study into ethnic groups in Britain are:

BLACK-CARIBBEAN

Over 70 per cent of the group live in London and Birmingham. Levels of segregation are much lower than for African Americans in the United States and for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in this country.

Suburbanisation of the population is clearly evident in their London distribution. The highest black-Caribbean proportion in a single ward is Roundwood in Brent, north-west London.

Unemployment rates are more than double the white average, and for young men, reach more than 40 per cent. The Caribbean population is much more concentrated into flats than houses.

BLACK-AFRICAN

Almost one-third, 32 per cent, of the Black-African population was born in England. They are the most qualified

ethnic minority, particularly those in the age groups 30 to 44 and 45 to 59 - the result of the student origins of the very first generation of Black-African migrants.

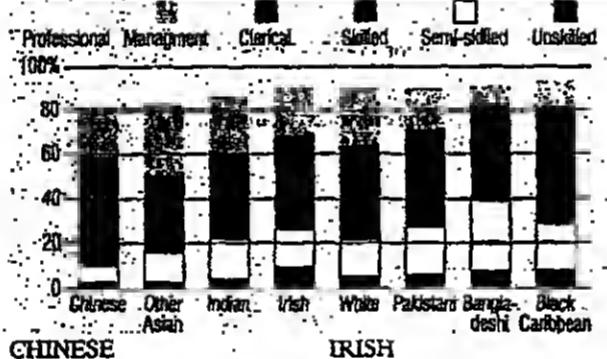
Two thirds of Black-Africans live in Inner London. The highest concentrations are in Lambeth where almost one in 10 of all black-Africans live and where they constitute about one in 15 of the population.

BLACK OTHER

Of the Black-Other population, one-third described themselves as (black) British, 14 per cent as Mixed (black/white), 28 per cent as Mixed-Other and 25 per cent as a variety of other answers.

The relatively large proportion of mixed parentage reflects the high incidence of inter-ethnic partnerships among those of Caribbean descent. The Black-Other population is extremely youthful and a high proportion of Black-Other families are described as being co-habiting couples and lone parents.

SOCIAL CLASS OF BRITAIN'S ETHNIC GROUPS



Just over one quarter of the Chinese population was born in Britain.

About one third of the Chinese population was born in Hong Kong.

The Chinese population is more geographically dispersed than any other ethnic group.

Though the stereotype of a Chinese is someone working in a restaurant or take-away, nearly 18 per cent of Chinese men are in professional occupations.

But Irish-born are significantly over-represented amongst those who are homeless - sleeping rough, and those who are living in temporary accommodation in hostels and lodgings.

Just over one quarter of the Indian population was born in Britain.

About seven in 10 were born in the Republic of Ireland, with the remainder born in Northern Ireland.

The proportion, 7.6 per cent in the highest social group - those with professional occupations - is slightly higher than the average for all men.

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4 news

McDonald's 'used police sources' in libel case

DANNY PENMAN

Special Branch officers have been passing information to McDonald's which has helped the burger company in its libel action against two north London environmentalists, the High Court has been told.

McDonald's also employed up to seven private detectives to gather information on the pair. The revelations came to light during the court action between the burger chain and the "McLibel Two", Helen Steel and Dave Morris.

The hamburger chain alleges that in the late Eighties a pair distributed a leaflet accusing McDonald's of producing food linked to heart disease, diabetes and cancer. The leaflet also accuses the fast-food outlet of abusing animals, its workers and the environment.

The pair, who are defending themselves against the \$26m corporation, deny libel, arguing that the leaflet paints an inaccurate picture of the company's activities. The case, which is now in its 23rd month and is expected to last at least until the

end of the year, is being heard without a jury.

Sydney Nicholson, McDonald's vice-president in the United Kingdom and former head of security, told the High Court that Special Branch officers supplied information to the company about environmentalists believed to be handing out the leaflet.

In 1989, officers from the Animal Rights National Index, which gathers information on animal-liberation activists for Special Branch, identified protesters outside the company's

headquarters. At least two of the campaigners were subsequently issued with libel writs by the burger chain.

Mr Nicholson told the court that Special Branch had said they considered the two environmentalists to be of "very little importance". What they were interested in was the possible connections with the animal liberation groups, and they did not indicate either of the two were involved in that, he said.

Mr Nicholson said he did not know if Special Branch had held any other meetings with the

burger company's private security agents because he never questioned them about their sources. "All the [McDonald's] security department have many, many contacts in the police service, they are all ex-police men; I would not ask them who their contacts were," he said.

He said that he would use police contacts for information. "If I wanted to know something about someone I would almost certainly make contact with the local crimes beat officer, the local CID officer, the local col-

Ms Steel claimed that at one meeting in 1990 four people attended, three of whom were undercover agents from London Greenpeace, which produced the leaflet and to which Ms Steel and Mr Davis belong. The organisation has no connection with Greenpeace International.

Mr Nicholson said he "had no idea" if three of the four were acting for McDonald's. "If they did, then that was the object of me using two agencies," he added.

Agencies acting for McDonald's also took letters belonging to the group. Mr Nicholson told the court that he gave categorical instructions for the agents

to do "nothing illegal and nothing improper". But, he added: "People do make mistakes."

As a spokeswoman for Scotland Yard denied that Special Branch regularly supplied information about suspected political, animal rights or environmental activists to companies. They would, however, tell them if they believed an organisation posed a threat to them.

"It is not the practice of the Metropolitan Police to provide lists of activists and we are unaware of any instances where that has happened," she added.

Major attacks lottery grants to gay groups

REBECCA FOWLER

John Major condemned the distribution of lottery money to charitable schemes for gay people, lesbians, deportees and prostitutes as "ill-founded and ill-judged" yesterday, in an unprecedented attack on the grant-making process.

His criticism followed the distribution of £159m to more than 2,000 projects by the lottery's Charities Board. Although beneficiaries included institutions such as the Red Cross, the Samaritans and the Prince's Trust, more controversial schemes were also helped.

Among those highlighted by Downing Street were the West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign, which received £66,000; the Leicester Lesbian, Gay and Bi-Sexual Centre, which received £50,000; the Gay London Policing Group, £26,000; and the Scottish Prostitutes Education Project, which received £22,000.

Mr Major told the Commons that while he welcomed the grants to charities, a minority were inappropriate. "A small number do not in my judgement reflect the way Parliament and the public expect lottery money to be spent."

The grants were based on the theme of youth and poverty, and the biggest went to a homeless project in Bradford, West York-

shire, which received £609,900. The Big Issue magazine, sold by homeless people, received £140,373, and the smallest grant included £500 to the Tong Recreation Association, on the Isle of Lewis.

The Charities Board defended the more controversial projects to receive grants on the basis they were picked on merit, not popularity. It said projects for gay people, lesbians and deportees accounted for less than 1 per cent of the total.

David Sieff, chairman of the board, said: "We must by law consider all applications we receive on merit. All groups offered grants submitted excellent applications to the board, which were assessed thoroughly against their criteria."

The grants were brought to the attention of Downing Street by Virginia Bottomley, the Secretary of State for Heritage, who has asked Mr Sieff for a written report on the choices, including The Gay London Policing Group, which works with victims of homophobic attacks, and aims to improve police attitudes. Its grant was to fund a youth worker.

Frances Coles, a project worker for the group, said: "We're disappointed the Government has reacted in this way. They seem to be saying some groups are of a higher priority than others when it comes to receiving National Lottery money."



Private Robert Jones (above) and his Victoria Cross and Zulu War Campaign Medal, which were sold yesterday. Below, a scene from the film Zulu. Photograph: Nicholas Turpin



Rorke's Drift VC auctioned for £80,000

A Victoria Cross won at the defence of Rorke's Drift during the Zulu War was auctioned for £80,000 yesterday and hopes were high that it will find its way to a regimental museum.

The medal, one of 11 awarded in the clash, was bought by an unidentified buyer at the sale at Westbury Hotel, Conduit Street, central London, for less than expected. It was awarded to Private Robert Jones, 21, of

a regiment which later became the South Wales Borderers. He played a crucial part in the stand of 153 soldiers against 4,000 Zulu warriors in January 1879.

Family members, including grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren were at the auction. Michael Naxton, representing the buyer, refused to give any details other than that he or she was British but not Welsh.

Jones's great-granddaughter, Bronwen Buffon, of Presteigne, Powys, said the family was "very proud" to be able to see the medal, which had been bought by an unnamed investor for £98 in 1950. "We would very much like to have it back... at the museum in Brecon; that is the family's aim. We are hoping whoever has bought it is on our side. If he would be very kind and lend it to the museum that would be wonderful."



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Dixons There's a great deal going on

Summer children lag peers at GCSE

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Children born in the summer are still lagging behind their peers even when they take GCSE, according to new research to be published next week.

Research by officials from the University of Cambridge Examinations Syndicate shows that autumn-born pupils score marks 2 to 3 per cent higher than those born in the summer.

A series of studies has found that summer-born pupils lag behind perhaps because they often start school at Easter, two terms after everyone else or in September when they are just four and struggle to keep up.

The researchers, who looked at results of 20,000 16-year-old pupils in science, 65,000 in maths and 1,679 in English, show that the effect lasts well beyond primary school.

They say that summer-born pupils are less likely to be entered for the more difficult levels in GCSE subjects where papers are divided according to ability.

Among the weakest pupils, the summer-born are more likely not to be entered for GCSE exams at all.

Mr Massey, head of the syndicate's research and evaluation division and one of the researchers, said: "It seems to me very interesting that you can detect such strong effects of birth-date in the data for 16-year-olds."

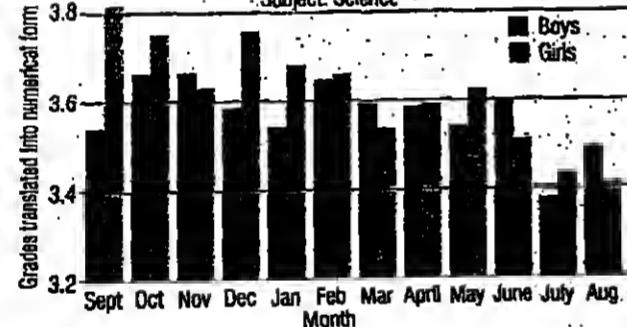
The differences caused by birth-date are as large as those caused by sex but we are concerned about the latter but not the former."

He urged secondary schools to make allowances for children's birth-date, who children were being placed into sets.

Letters, page 11

HOW BIRTH DATE AFFECTS PROGRESS

Subject: Science



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Paddy Ashdown tells Donald Macintyre why Euro-sceptics are wrecking our democracy and of his zeal for reform of the political system



Champion of the European dream

Paddy Ashdown has warned that the emergence of the Ross Perot-like Sir James Goldsmith was the latest sign of the "dangerous mess" British politics found itself in.

As the billionaire businessman orchestrated the defiance of Tory Euro-sceptics in the Commons, the leader of the Liberal Democrats went on to the counter-attack by outlining to the *Independent* his vision of Britain's future role in Europe.

Despite opinion polls showing voters' apathy on the subject, Mr Ashdown said, Sir James and his £20m would make Europe the central issue at the next general election. He warned all parties to be "well equipped for that", and admonished pro-European voices in British politics for being too slow to speak out and champion the pro-European cause.

This problem had been compounded by the exclusion of the public from the debate about Europe. So far the discussion had been conducted in the "gilded palaces of Europe and in Commons mumbo-jumbo", Mr Ashdown said, and it was therefore scarcely surprising that "some rather ugly beasts were gathering at the edge of the campfire".

Most germinally, Mr Ashdown told the Oxford Union last night, Sir James's emergence as a Ross Perot in the making was the latest sign yet of the dangerous "mess" in which British politics finds itself - a mess which he told his audience is nothing less than a crisis of democracy.

Mr Ashdown sees constitutional change as interconnected to the European debate and had clear messages for both the Tories and Labour. He also had the suggestion of giving the House of Commons the right to elect the Prime Minister, instead of leaving it in the hands of royal appointment.

The message for the Tories, as they prepare for their holy war against the Opposition's programme for constitutional change was that the British constitution was neither an invi-

tale "museum piece" nor so fragile that it would be collapsed by change.

Such struggles as one for women's votes were testament to that, he said. So too, though this was change "totally in the wrong direction", was the transformation of much of Britain into an "unelected quango state".

The message for Labour was: "For goodness sake get your act together. This is the best chance we have had probably had this century for modernising the British constitution... it is the precursor of all the things Labour wants to do, and in a different way we want to achieve."

Mr Ashdown had two distinct and related worries about Labour. The first was that Mr Blair's party has not yet grasped the importance of sys-

temic change to the functions of government; he was unsure that constitutional reform has yet "entered the iron of its soul". He cites, using the poll tax as an example, of what a government with the support of 40 per cent of the population can get wrong.

There was also a lesson from the poll tax of the need for welfare reform, which he argued could only be achieved with parties sharing power. Pro-PR figures such as Robin Cook and Jeff Rooker understood that, but, he said, "the jury's out" on whether others, including Tony Blair, yet did.

The second worry is muddle over the mechanics. Mr Ashdown doesn't believe that Labour plans to remove the right of hereditary peers to vote is more than a "half hearted change" which will merely install the biggest quango in the

land; and he detects signs of Speaker panic about Scottish devolution - over the tax raising powers of the Scottish parliament, and over the so-called "West Lothian question" of Scottish MPs voting on English-only business.

But the bigger worry still was over proportional representation. Mr Ashdown welcomed Mr Blair's successful fight to retain Labour's commitment to a referendum on PR, though he grumbled about the Labour leader's refusal to say which side he will be on.

He will insist today that the referendum is early on in the next Parliament. If Mr Blair does back the change then it must be at a time when the government is popular and not doomed to lose. And secondly the new system must be in place before the next election.

Ashdown on Europe: 'Rather ugly beasts are gathering at the campfire'

Ashdown on the constitution: 'This is becoming an unelected quango state'

Ashdown on Labour: 'They must grasp that electoral reform is vital'

here: would it be the Speaker who put successive proposals for a sustainable government to the Commons? Such a move would keep the monarch forever out of party politics.

The plan goes hand in hand with Mr Ashdown's idea for fixed-term Parliaments, topical now that the government was waiting for the best moment to call an election. Instead of snap elections we would have the "constructive vote of confidence" in which an Opposition only brought down a government in a vote of confidence if it could assemble an alternative by trading with other parties.

For Mr Ashdown constitutional reform was the way to restore "depth" to British politics. Here he was almost apocalyptic. He said he had seen Irish politics turn from a "deep politics" to a "narrow thin crust" which can be easily subverted by a few extremists. He feared the same here.

We were back to Sir James Goldsmith and the hardline, frightened Euro-sceptics. By reconnecting British politics to a world outside we "deepen" once again the political system. "If power is the skin on the custard: if it rests with a few people at the top then that power is easily subverted by a weak prime minister who appears a passing group of people who tweak it by the tail."

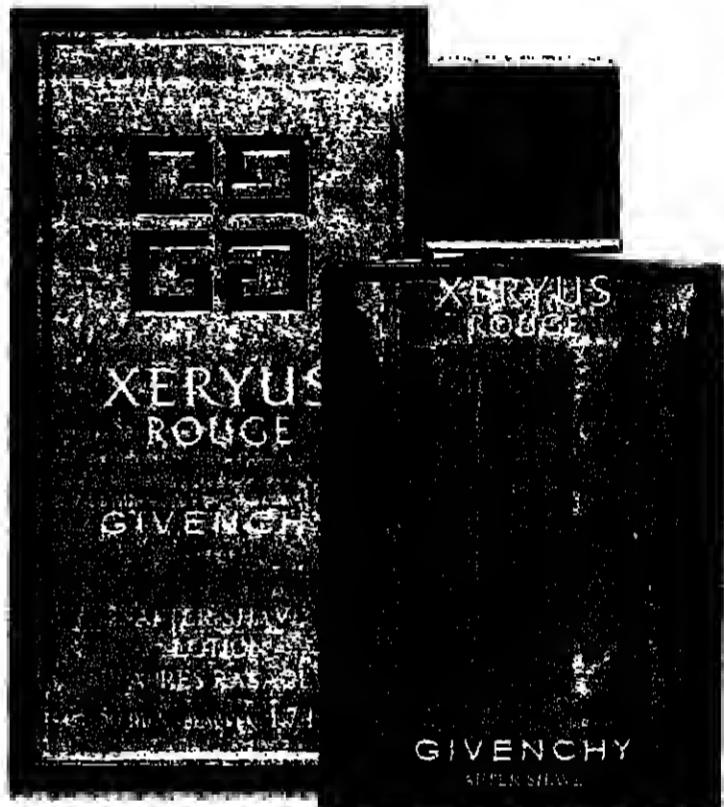
I asked Mr Ashdown whether he now saw a paradox that whereas the Liberal Democrats once looked like a guarantee that a Labour government was safe, they were now guaranteeing the opposite: a road of sometimes daunting change. Mr Ashdown insisted his party was where it had always been.

Left was a term he rejected; radical one he did not: "You might argue that Labour's job is to keep the government off balance and our job is to map out the programme for the next government."

He paused and then laughed as if appalled by his own boldness. But he does not resile from the judgement.

Comment, page 12

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1996: 37,000 under-5s die every day; many survivors are slaves

JAMES ROBERTS

Get pregnant in the developing world, and your chances of dying or being disabled as a result are one in four. If your child survives the pregnancy and labour, then he or she still has a one in ten chance of dying by the age of five. Survive all this and your child's chances of going on to join the world's army of child labourers are around one in ten in Asia and one in four in Africa.

These are just some of the facts of life and death described in two reports published this week: *The Progress of Nations*, Unicef's annual review of the welfare of the world's children, and *Child Labour*, a discussion document which the International Labour Office is putting before Labour ministers from 173 countries in Geneva today.

Global statistics of the kind quoted are necessarily impressionistic, broad brush-strokes rather than precise calculations. But research is continuous and so occasionally the broad figures have to be revised.

For some years, the generally accepted figure for maternal deaths has been half a million a year. But new research has prompted the United Nations Children's Fund to adjust this figure upwards to 585,000. As a result, and in view of the obvious fact that welfare of mother and infant are inseparable, the primary focus of the latest Unicef report is on what it calls this "unspoken tragedy".

Behind the cold figures lies horror. Perhaps 140,000 women die in their teens and twenties of internal haemorrhaging. Around 75,000 die having attempted an abortion – some 50,000 desperate women and girls try that every day. Most survive, but with the legacy of some crippling disease. Another 75,000 die with brain and kidney damage in the convulsions of tetanus, described by one survivor as the worst imaginable feeling in the world.

The report also examines malnutrition amongst children. It confounds those who assume that the record of Africa is the worst in the world. There are 86 million children under five who are malnourished in South



Burden of responsibility: Rural poverty has created an environment in which children suffer to feed their families

Photograph: Francesco Zizola

Asia (50 per cent of all under-fives), as against 32 million (25 per cent) in sub-Saharan Africa. This is partly a result of a whole range of cultural attitudes and assumptions in South Asia which prevents mothers from being able to look after their children properly. Women are subordinate in most of the world, the report says, but in South Asia, the subordination is of a different order altogether, with the obvious consequences for the quality of life of mother and child.

"However much a mother may love her children, it is all but impossible for her to pro-

vide high-quality child care if she herself is poor and oppressed, illiterate and uninformed, anaemic and unhealthy, has five or six other children, lives in a slum or shanty, has neither clean water nor safe sanitation, nor support from health services, nor her society, nor the father of her children."

It is poverty, too, which ensures that 37,000 children under five die every day, mostly from five diseases for which we long ago discovered cheap cures: measles, diarrhoea, malaria, pneumonia and malnutrition. "Children in rich countries do not die from the

common, preventable diseases of childhood," says the Unicef report. "Children in poor countries do."

The crushing weight of poverty also adds to the pressure on families to send their children out to work at the earliest opportunity. "Poverty is the single greatest force which creates the flow of children into the workplace," says the ILO. "It forces many children to work full-time for their own and their families' survival."

The ILO has campaigned to end child labour since it was founded in 1919. And with 73 million children between 10

and 14 economically active in 1995 – 13.2 per cent of the total number of 10-14s – the campaign goes on. While Asian children make up about half of these figures – sometimes as slaves, sometimes as part of a miserably exploited industrial workforce – Africa comes out worst.

One African child in three is engaged in economic activity. Most of these are working on the land, and it is hard work: a child can be made to run 15 miles each day, leading a team of animals up and down a pumping track to feed a herd from a well. It is the extremely

arduous nature of rural labour that helps explain why cities attract so many street children. The scale of migration is directly linked to the severity of working conditions in rural areas. Even after experiencing the horrors of life as one of the thousands of street children in say, Nairobi, children can still prefer these conditions to those in the rural areas.

Child Labour: What is to be done? ILO, Vincent House, Vincent Square, London SW1P 2NB. *The Progress of Nations*, Unicef, 55 Lincolns Inn Fields, London WC2A 3NB.

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

The Indian Prime Minister, Deve Gowda, neared victory in a confidence motion yesterday even as corruption charges mounted against one of his government's pillars of political support. The first of two days of parliamentary debate on the motion was overshadowed by allegations against former prime minister Narasimha Rao's ruling Congress party. Congress has promised to give Mr Gowda's centre-left minority government the backing it needed to survive the vote of confidence expected today. The opposition sought to capitalise on a widening fall-off in import scandal and embarrass Mr Gowda's United Front alliance, which in recent elections campaigned against Congress over alleged corruption. *Reuter - New Delhi*

Bangladesh mounted a huge security operation for the country's second parliamentary elections in four months and pledged that everything possible had been done to ensure voting was clean. Bangladeshis believe much of their future depends on today's elections, whose success is seen as crucial if the country of 115 million people is to put a history of military rule and political chaos behind it. Troops stationed in all 64 administrative districts and big cities were on standby to help some 400,000 police and paramilitary soldiers guarding polling stations. *Reuter - Dhaka*

France would stand by Quebec whatever political future it chooses, Prime Minister Alain Juppé said on arriving in Canada's mainly French-speaking province, which has a strong separatist movement. After talks in Ottawa with Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, the French leader hailed what he called "the spirit of resistance" of the people of Quebec. "Whatever destiny you choose, France will be at your side," Mr Juppé said. *Reuter - Quebec*

Seven people were arrested near Cadiz charged with smuggling a ton of hashish into Spain. The detentions concluded a four-month investigation into how traffickers' boats from Morocco could elude armed patrols along Spain's southern coast. One of the arrested, policeman Antonio Martinez Perez, is accused of giving the traffickers details of Civil Guard patrols in exchange for money. Hashish trafficking from Morocco has increased recently, despite a clampdown on fast launches based in Gibraltar, prompting the authorities to suspect the growth of alternative networks. *Elizabeth Nash - Madrid*

Aids has become the main killer of men aged 25 to 49 in Copenhagen, outstripping heart disease and cancer and accounting for one in four deaths, the Danish Medical Journal reported yesterday. "This puts the Danish capital in the same league as the worst Aids-hit cities in the United States," the journal reported. *Reuter - Copenhagen*

A Belarusian anti-terrorist unit shot and killed a man who seized at least 15 children and their teacher hostage in the capital of Minsk. The man broke into the kindergarten in Minsk, the capital, claiming he had a bomb inside a suitcase he was carrying. The attacker ordered the children, aged four to five, and their teacher to line up against the wall, said another teacher who was in the room. The kidnapper was killed with two shots to the head after security agents determined he did have an explosive device inside his suitcase. *AP - Minsk*

Eugenio Scalfari, founder of *La Repubblica*, won the Ilchi International Prize for Journalism, Italy's most prestigious media award. Mr Scalfari, 72, retired as editor-in-chief of the Italian daily this year, on the 20th anniversary of the newspaper. He continues to write editorials. *AP - Rome*

Tearful Dole calls it quits in the Senate

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

With some tears, a typically rambling speech, but not a little pride in a job well done, Bob Dole yesterday bade farewell to the Senate that has been his life for a quarter of a century but which has turned into an obstacle to the one job he wants even more, the presidency of the United States.

For a day drenched in history, it started normally enough, with Mr Dole the Republican Majority leader rising at 9.45am to speak about an amendment to trade legislation and a bill consolidating Medicare funding.

But just after noon, he rose to speak again. And when he finished this time, he truly had become just Citizen Dole, with nowhere to go but the White House, or home".

"I want to thank all my colleagues..." he began, only to stop abruptly, choking, as he stood for the last time at the Majority leader's desk. But quickly he gathered himself,

paying tribute to family, friends, and staff, quoting Abraham Lincoln and Dwight Eisenhower, those Republican presidents from the Midwest he hopes to emulate.

In reply, Mr Dole lapsed into that familiar fractured syntax to describe the institution he has served for 27 years.

"I've had a great life, a few bumps along the way... A lot of different views here, like America, that's what America's all about. We are the envy of the world, we're the liberty's torch here, that's what America's all about, a beacon of hope... Our best tomorrows are yet to come," he said.

Thus ends a Congressional career of 35 years, including a record 11 years as Republican leader in the Senate, and no less than 12,781 roll-call votes (the electronic era has yet to reach the floor of the Senate), which if they took place consecutively would last day and night for four-and-a-half months.

It was the Senate at its most typical: unctuous, pompous and utterly forgiving, hiding partisanship beneath old-world manners. "He will cast a long season", Mr Dole said, "and my



Dole: Senate blocked his path to the White House

season in the Senate is about to come to an end. However, this is far less the closing of one chapter than the opening of another".

When he finished, his colleagues gathered around him applauding for a full 10 minutes until he left the chamber for ever. Sheila Frahm was sworn in as his successor.

Now the last and toughest battle begins. "Ad Astra Per Aspera," reads the Kansas state motto, "To the Stars Through Hard Times," and it could have been written for him. No Majority leader has, and only two sitting Senators – Warren Harding and John F. Kennedy – have been elected president this century, which is why Mr Dole yesterday called it quits.

But to "every thing there is a season", Mr Dole said, "and my

Robinson seeks to redefine UN role

DAVID USBORNE
New York

Mary Robinson, the Irish President, last night staunchly defended the record of the United Nations and appealed for a new commitment to its ideals by the world's governments. Her speech had the ring of a platform to launch her candidacy to become the organisation's next Secretary-General.

Mrs Robinson, who was speaking at a foreign affairs forum in New York, called for the development of a new "global ethic" or the "idea of community at the global level". That meant, she said: "improving, strengthening and developing the pre-eminent multilateral organisation – the United Nations."

Her comments, which also included an appeal for increased aid to the developing world, seemed calculated to position herself as a possible successor to Boutros-Ghali, whose first five-year term as UN Secretary-General expires at the end of this year.

Decrying the current financial crisis that faces the UN and berating countries for allowing their support to it to wane, Mrs Robinson peppered her speech with criticisms that seemed aimed in particular at the United States. She begins a state visit to the US today.

Achieving the "global ethic", she said, would mean, in particular, new efforts to help poorer nations gain prosperity through increased aid, "amounting perhaps to a mutual contractual relationship between donor and recipient rather than a relationship of dependency".

She was especially scathing of the inattention of governments to Africa. "Decision-makers in the developed world looking at the chaos and horror of a Liberia, a Somalia or a Rwanda, too often see only the 'heart of darkness' and think only now their own citizens can be safely evacuated."

"It is not acceptable for countries of the West, after centuries of interference and intrusion, to limit their involvement now to rapid armed intervention into situations of chaos to rescue their own nationals".

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Syria painted as the villain of the Middle East

ROBERT FISK
Beirut

In the Middle East, you can still find old maps which show Damascus as the capital of the Arab world, the bastion of Umayyad power. But just now, Syrians might be forgiven for believing that their neighbours are gangling up on President Hafez al-Assad's regime, in a deliberate attempt to isolate and even destabilise the country.

State Department claims that bombs have exploded in Syria, Turkey's ever-broadening military alliance with Israel, Israeli threats to attack Syrian targets in Lebanon and Jordanian allegations that Syrian "terrorists" have been captured crossing the Syrian-Jordanian border all appear to be lining Syria up for political or even military attack.

Syrian reservists were sent to the country's northern border with Turkey at the height of Israel's assault on Lebanon last April for fear that Turkish

forces might – with Israeli collusion – strike into northern Syria to attack PKK guerrillas. Syria maintains an unofficial alliance with the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, whose press conferences, held to announce new or broken ceasefires with Turkish forces, are almost always held in a region of the Lebanese Beqaa valley in which Syrian troops have firm control.

But Israel's agreement to upgrade 54 Turkish F-4 Phantom fighter-bombers and, even more important, Israel's newly acquired permission to fly its combat aircraft in Turkish air space, present a very clear military threat to Syria.

So clear, in fact, that even President Mubarak of Egypt, Israel's oldest peace partner, has condemned the Turkish-Israeli alliance.

A long-running dispute over Turkey's overuse of the waters of the Euphrates river and the far older irredentist claim by Syria to the land around

Iskenderun (the Syrian town of Alexandretta) which the French gave to Turkey just before the Second World War in the vain hope that Ankara would join the Allies in fighting Hitler) form deeper, but less serious causes of dispute between the two nations.

Ominously, the US State Department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, has now chosen to remind Syria that Washington is concerned about "terrorism" directed against Turkey and coming from Syria.

The Burns statement is almost identical to Israeli claims that Hizbollah, "terrorism" against Israeli occupation troops in southern Lebanon is supported by Syria.

Much to Syria's annoyance, the United States has maintained Syria on its list of "countries supporting terrorism," a status that effectively deprives Damascus of economic aid and US technology.

On the same day that the Americans expressed their sup-

port for Turkey, another State Department spokesman volunteered the information that the US Embassy in Damascus was warning American citizens in Syria to take precautions after "several explosions" in the country. He gave no details of these incidents and his remarks were promptly denounced by the pro-Syrian Lebanese paper *Ash-Sharq* as "rumours..." which are intended to create internal tension and turmoil.

Reports in Lebanon say that "sound bombs" was how they were described – had been heard in Damascus but that they were so small as to be insignificant. One rumour, also denied by Syria, says that a car bomb was defused in the port of Lattakia.

The growing pressure on Syria almost precisely coincided with Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud election victory in Israel, prompting Syrians to question whether the United States and

its allies were trying to distract world attention away from the collapse of the "peace process" by demonising Syria as the real culprit behind the failure of US-Israeli policy. A year ago, for example, US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, talking to students in Indiana, was describing President Assad as a "brilliant man" and a "fine conversationalist" who had made "a strategic decision" for peace with Israel. Yet by last month, Mr Christopher had changed his tune. He was worried, he told the *Los Angeles Times*, by President Assad's "hesitancy and his mistrust" and feared that the Syrian president's "suspicion and fear" might prevent him making peace. No one questioned why Mr Christopher should have so suddenly altered his opinion of one of the most powerful Arab leaders.

Since the Likud election win, US commentators have also been accusing Syria of sabotaging peace by the year's end with mutual security for both sides.

Security, however, is the one thing Syria's enemies now seem anxious it should be deprived of.

مكتبة الأهل

Russian elections: President's campaign aims to climax on high note as over-confidence threatens to snatch away victory

Yeltsin rallies youth vote with rock and roll

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

Boris Yeltsin's campaign bandwagon will clatter into Moscow's Red Square today for one of his most important closing flourishes, a rally to whip up enthusiasm among Russia's young people for Sunday's presidential election.

The event coincides with a national holiday to mark Russia's declaration of independence six years ago, an occasion which Mr Yeltsin clearly aims to use as a platform to drum up further support in his effort to

defeat his Communist rival, Gennady Zyuganov.

If past performances are any guide, he will exploit it to the full. The organisers expect the president to appear on stage alongside several popular Russian rock bands. The audience will be bombarded with messages telling them to "choose or lose". Pictures will be broadcast nationwide on state television, which has come increasingly under the sway of the Kremlin as the election approaches.

The Independence Day gala — which includes fireworks and marching bands — is a reminder

of how keen the Yeltsin campaign is to mobilise the young vote, which tends to be anti-Communist. "A large number of young people stayed home during December's parliamentary elections," said Dmitry Tugarinov, spokesman for the organisers. "We have to get them out this time."

Nor is this the Yeltsin team's only anxiety. There are signs that some presidential handlers think his campaign is overheating, not least because of his lead in the polls. Mr Yeltsin's boast that he will win the first round outright by getting more

than 50 per cent has led to worries that voters will conclude he is assured of victory and opt for a third candidate — or not vote at all.

In what may have been a move to dampen down over-optimism, Yakov Borovoy, press director at his campaign headquarters, yesterday produced figures predicting Mr Yeltsin

would lose to Mr Zyuganov in the first round — with 26 per cent to the Communists' 28 per cent.

This contradicts claims by Sergei Filatov, one of the top co-ordinators of the president's team, who expected to see Mr

Yeltsin with 30-35 per cent support by the end of this week. Mr Borovoy said his figures were based on nationwide surveys. He also said the number of undecided voters had narrowed to a core of about 15 to 20 per cent of the electorate, dominated by poorly educated, low-income, elderly women.

If Mr Yeltsin is beaten by Mr Zyuganov, it will alarm supporters in Russia and the West, but it should be no surprise. The Communist-nationalist coalition has a strong grassroots organisation throughout most of provincial Russia, where re-

sentation over market reforms is strong.

Moreover, there are several other election day headaches. The first round coincides with the Euro 96 football match between Russia and Germany, which could easily lure voters away. And many city-dwelling Russians traditionally spend the day working in the vegetable gardens of their "dachas" — country houses, where they can only vote if they apply for permission to do so. Mr Yeltsin's campaign managers, who want a high turnout, say that few have so far applied.

But if Mr Yeltsin does come second, it will not be far wrong of trying to win. He was in the southern city of Novocherkassk yesterday, shrewdly reminding voters of the horrors of Communism by promising to build a monument to 33 people who were shot by the Soviets for taking part in a demonstration over food shortages in 1962.

Today's event is likely to be another flamboyant performance from the all-singing, all-dancing Mr Yeltsin — and a contrast to Mr Zyuganov's last outing in Moscow. Mr Zyuganov has been criticised for being dull, but these days it is truer to describe him as plain odd. Last Sunday he held a rally, featuring peals of (Orthodox) church bells, a parade of icons and scantily clad majorettes, at which he launched into a passage from the Bible, comparing Mr Yeltsin to Satan.

"Let's remember what is in the Apocalypse," he said. "The Devil has sent two beasts from hell. The first has a mark on his head (a reference to Mikhail Gorbachev), and the second has a mark on his hand" — a reference to Mr Yeltsin, who is missing two fingers.

View from Vladimir could be the clincher

Vladimir — We were sitting in the restaurant of an hotel in Vladimir, a provincial city where Julia, the daughter of an acin, was born and has so far spent all her 25 years.

Over the past few weeks I had heard a lot from young people about their attitude to politics, and in particular, the presidential election in just over a fortnight's time. But they were mostly Muscovites, the advocates and beneficiaries of reforms. What I wanted from Julia Smolnikov was to know what life was like for young people outside the liberal-leaning cosmopolitan centres of Moscow and St Petersburg. What was it like out here, in Russia's answer to Northampton or Coventry?

Her grandfather had been a big wheel in the regional Communist party, a sincere Leninist who had declined in feather his nest so like many others in the nomenklatura. "People say to us 'Surely you have some money from him?'" but we got nothing." She owns no car, and no property. When she goes on holiday this summer in Germany, she will travel on a £60 (£40) coach ticket and then get a temporary job, to pay her way home. Her biggest treat is being able to buy music cassettes and eat chocolate.

Although it seems a peaceful place, full of greenery at this

The Kremlin cannot afford to ignore the provincial vote, writes Phil Reeves

time of year, her home city is not without problems, beyond the usual alcohol epidemic. Every now and then, the mafia burn down a street kiosk — the principal street outlet for vodka, beer, sweets and newspapers — for failing to pay protection money. But not long ago they murdered a businessman she knew. Ms Smolnikov carries a can of Mace in her handbag.

She lives alone in a room provided by her university, where she works in the department of international relations. As her monthly salary (£80) is the price of dinner at a half-decent Moscow restaurant, this is all she can afford. This did not seem to bother her much. "I don't need all that much, and if I want more I can find ways of earning it." She works as a guide, a teacher, and a translator when the opportunity arises. "People have to take responsibility for themselves."

In the December elections, she didn't find time to vote. In the Vladimir region, some 180 miles east of Moscow, the Communists came first in the parliamentary election, followed by the ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky's party. This time, she intends to do go to the polls, although she has yet to make up her mind whom to support.

She regards the vodka-loving Boris Yeltsin as "unpresidential", hates his "bad, uneducated" Russian, and fears a second term would bring a return of the Brezhnev years of stagnation. She knows some smart young progressive Communists at the university but fears that Gennady Zyuganov's Communist-nationalist bloc contains too many extremists to be a desirable option. "I would rather have my freedom than their cheap sausage."

She was, she said, mulling over her choice. So are thousands of other young people around this vast nation. As more of them are more sympathetic to Mr Yeltsin than to Mr Zyuganov, their decision could be crucial to the Kremlin, which fears the young vote won't bother to turn out.

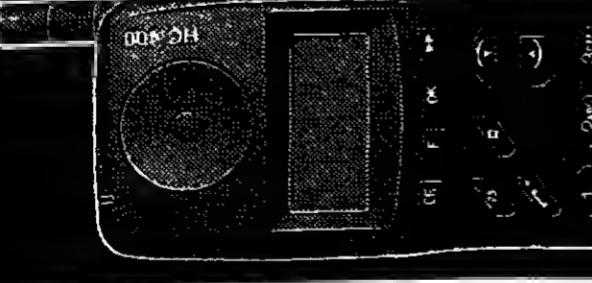
Thus, its campaign slogan "Vote or Lose"; thus, Mr Yeltsin's promise not to send conscripts to Chechnya and his announcement of higher student grants; and, thus, the spectacle of him dancing at a rock concert this week in the Urals city of Ufa. He knows people like Ms Smolnikov count. The question is whether they think he does.



Boris Yeltsin listens to the complaints of a pensioner while on the campaign trail in Vorkuta, a mining town in north Russia. Photograph: Reuter

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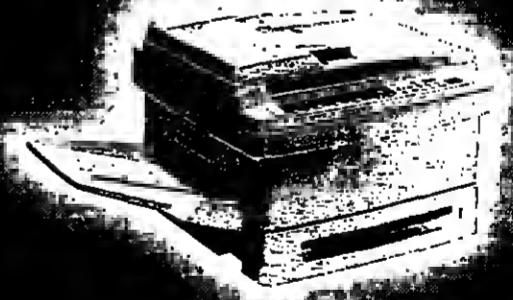
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Grim choice: Workers at the debt-ridden Gdansk shipyard in Poland yesterday where 3,000 voted for a 48-hour strike from today in protest at government plans to declare the yard bankrupt. Photograph: Paweł Kopczynski/Reuters

US and Europe ignore Bosnia poll warning

A climate of fear and ruthless clashing nationalism is jeopardising the chances of staging free and fair elections in Bosnia, according to an internal analysis by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). However, OSCE officials are expected to bow to US and European pressure and reluctantly declare that the elections should go ahead by 14 September, as stipulated by last year's Dayton peace agreement.

The OSCE was charged under the Dayton accord with preparing elections intended to provide Bosnia with multi-national, democratic institutions. However, the OSCE analysis indicates that, far from stitching Bosnia back together, the elections, if held as early as September, may consolidate the country's division into Muslim, Serb and Croat sectors.

Representatives of about 40

countries will meet in Florence tomorrow to review progress in implementing the Dayton terms. The US and major European powers are expected to propose a September election, with the OSCE fixing a precise date later this month.

A summary of the OSCE study concludes that three vital conditions for free elections are not yet in place: a politically neutral environment, freedom of movement, and freedom of association. Independent media are thin on the ground, especially in the Serb and Croat areas, and it is impossible to phone between the Muslim-Croat federation and the Serb-controlled Republika Srpska.

The OSCE analysis states

that in the Serb, Croat and mainly Muslim areas, civic institutions, such as police, courts and local government structures are dominated by one nationalist party – respectively, the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and Muslim-led Party of Democratic Action (SDA). It is especially critical of the HDZ, contending that "in Croat-controlled federation territory ... the ruling HDZ has effectively ensured that the climate of fear prevents the evolution of a political alternative".

According to the study, the borders between the Muslim-Croat federation and Republika Srpska have become more open since the war ended, but most Bosnians do not enjoy freedom of movement. The Serb, Croat and Muslim sectors have different vehicle number plates, which encourages police roadblocks, and the Bosnian Serbs have sabotaged United Nations efforts to set up bus services between the Muslim-Croat and Serb zones.

The OSCE analysis estimates that only a small proportion of Bosnia's 2.6 million refugees and displaced people have returned home to areas where they would be in an ethnic minority. Non-governmental observers say this makes it unlikely fair elections can be held in areas from which large numbers of people have been expelled.

It also suggests that Bosnia's three-way partition along national lines is steadily becoming a fact on the ground. This trend has been underlined since the end of the war by the movement of tens of thousands of Serbs out of Sarajevo, which is under Muslim-led government control, and their replacement by Muslim refugees who originally lived in areas such as eastern Bosnia which are now under

complete Serb domination. OSCE officials are known to be angry with the US and European governments for insisting the elections should go ahead, in spite of the likelihood that they will be seriously flawed. Some officials were shocked when Robert Frowick, the head of the OSCE's Bosnia mission, appeared to cave in to US and European pressure by ordering his staff not to highlight negative developments in Bosnia in their reports.

Other senior international officials, such as Antonio Cassese, the Italian head of the UN war crimes tribunal, have also cast doubt on the wisdom of



Holbrooke: Better to vote now than never at all

holding elections in September. He said that if the Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadžić and General Ratko Mladić, remained at large, free elections "will not be possible in an environment polluted by war criminals".

But the US State Department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, said this week that the Dayton accords "do not say that the conditions [for the Bosnian elections] have to be pristine or Jeffersonian".

Richard Holbrooke, the former US diplomat who brokered the Dayton peace, said that if elections were not held while Nato troops were stationed in areas such as eastern Bosnia which are now under

New Balkan force 'should be 20,000 strong'

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

substantial contingent should remain, including British and US troops.

The committee's chairman, Michael Colvin, said it had doubts about the plausibility of the elections scheduled for 14 September, because the infrastructure was in tatters, the election data was based on the 1991 census and 80 per cent of the Bosnian population, displaced by war, was now living in the wrong place.

Yesterday, Labour's defence spokesman, Dr David Clark, said he believed Britain, which has 11,000 troops in Bosnia, should keep about 7,500 troops there next year.

Sources in Sarajevo said that a "significant" US ground force would need to be of a similar size. The "post-I-For" or "I-For II" contingent, is likely to comprise a US, a British and probably a French brigade, totalling about 20,000 troops, about a third of the current force. Additional US troops and air support would be based in Hungary and Croatia.

The British general commanding the I-For ground forces, Lieutenant General Sir Michael Walker, said in Sarajevo yesterday that he also believed a continuing military presence would be necessary.

"There is going to have to be something around to show that the international community is still determined to prevent the war from breaking out again", he said.

"So at some stage the international community is going to have to allow a debate, which I suspect is going to be behind locked doors, to come out into the open".

Speaking in Washington, the US Assistant Secretary of State responsible for Bosnian policy, John Kornblum, said it was "possible, even likely", that American troops would continue to have a role after the present I-For mandate expires on 20 December. The leading participants in the force have refused to discuss publicly what will happen after that.

But the remarks by Mr Kornblum and General Walker make it clear that the force, almost certainly run by Nato, will have to stay to preserve peace because civilian reconstruction has been slower than hoped.

The comments from Sarajevo and Washington coincided with a report by the influential House of Commons Defence Committee, which also said a

precipitate decision to withdraw I-For could be "very serious". It is by no means impossible that the former warring factions will return to conflict. While not calling for an open-ended commitment, we believe that the countries participating in I-For should maintain a substantial peace-keeping force in Bosnia until more significant progress has been made in implementing the Dayton peace agreement.

"The civilian side is taking much longer to build up than we had hoped", an I-For officer in Sarajevo said yesterday. "We need to be here in strength well beyond the elections and until the elected authorities have extended their control."

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If Russia turns back the clock, everyone loses

Next Sunday, for only the second time in 1,000 years, Russians will choose their leader in a free election. That, in itself, is a measure of the distance Russia has travelled in terms of political culture since the nightmarish experiment of Soviet utopianism. It ought to be a cause for celebration, for Russians and people in Western countries alike. Why, then, does a sense of foreboding hang over the presidential election?

The main reason is that to give people freedom of political choice does not guarantee that they will choose wisely. Consider France in 1848, when the introduction of universal suffrage resulted in the election as president of Louis Napoleon, who three years later launched a coup d'état, suppressed his opponents and turned himself into a dictatorial emperor. Or consider the way that Hitler forced his way to power partly by means of free elections in Weimar Germany.

In today's Russia, there is every possibility that voters will turn to Gennady Zyuganov, the Communist challenger to President Boris Yeltsin. It will be a tragedy for Russia, and a serious setback to the West, if they do. Mr Zyuganov is not like the former Communists running Hungary or Poland, whose opportunistic transformation into Western European-style social democrats required a commitment to civil liberties and a free enterprise economy.

On the contrary, Mr Zyuganov and his associates reek with nostalgia for the Soviet Union and most of its works: the centralised economy, the instinct to strike hard at domestic political opponents, the pursuit of a Russian nationalist agenda cloaked in internationalist ideals. Should he defeat Mr Yeltsin in the expected second round run-off in early July, Mr Zyuganov would probably not return Russia to its blackest authoritarian past. But the fragile democratic institutions set up in the 1990s would almost certainly not be able to take the strain of a Communist presidency, and there is a serious risk that Russia's relations with the West would descend into confrontation.

As Western governments and most Russian liberals have recognised, the dangers associated with a Zyuganov presidency are so great that a Yeltsin victory is preferable. Yet a second term in office for Mr Yeltsin would bring its own problems, in Russia and outside. Neither in the West nor at home is Mr Yeltsin recognised any longer as the courageous crusader for democracy and human rights who did more than any other person to bring down Communism in 1991.

His record has been badly tainted by the brutal and unnecessary military crackdown in Chechnya. In many people's eyes, he was also wrong to blow up the Russian parliament in 1993 and introduce a constitution that hobbled

the legislature and placed all effective power with the presidency – that is to say, himself. Since his first election victory in June 1991, Russia has evolved under Mr Yeltsin's leadership into a strange hybrid of democracy and autocracy. It has given ordinary Russians more freedom than perhaps at any time in their history, but it has also conferred too much power on unaccountable institutions such as the armed forces and the renamed but not so reformed KGB. Lack of proper legislative oversight has enabled sinister individuals in the presidential entourage, notably Mr Yeltsin's personal bodyguard, Alexan-

der Korzhakov, to acquire excessive influence.

Mr Yeltsin's campaign tactics are also open to criticism. By forcing Russia's central bank to hand over 5 trillion roubles (£600m) for the funding of his spending promises, the president has compromised the bank's independence – a fundamental feature of Russia's economic reform programme, on which co-operation with the International Monetary Fund and other Western institutions must depend. Mr Yeltsin's team has also succeeded in slanting television coverage of the election grossly in favour of the president, to the

point where Mr Zyuganov might use Mr Yeltsin's abuse of media freedom to justify a crackdown on the Russian press and broadcasters if the Communists should win.

In his foreign policy, Mr Yeltsin has fallen short of Western expectations. He has manipulated ethnic and territorial disputes and exerted Russian economic power to regain influence over many former Soviet republics. He has strenuously resisted Nato's enlargement, without showing much sensitivity to the craving for security that dominates the attitudes of central and eastern European countries.

Still, matters would probably be worse under Mr Zyuganov. The difficult but often constructive relationship that the West has with Mr Yeltsin's Russia would turn into something more tense with Mr Zyuganov in the Kremlin. The semi-democratic, semi-autoritarian Yeltsin-led state would lose many of its democratic features under a Zyuganov presidency.

However, if the West is right to hope

for a Yeltsin victory, it must also hope that there will be more progress during Mr Yeltsin's second term towards consolidating democratic institutions and making Russia a law-based state.

Having suffered centuries of autocratic rule and 70 years of violence and intolerance under Communism, Russia cannot be expected to turn into a model democracy overnight. But Mr Yeltsin has,

over the past three years, done as much to hinder his country's democratic development as he has done to promote it. If he wins a second term, he must use it to consolidate and extend democracy. The cause of freedom in Russia matters profoundly to all of us outside its borders, as well as within; if Russia fails, following this election, to strengthen and improve its nascent democracy, we will all suffer the consequences.

Paddy for PM?

Paddy Ashdown has been fantasising (in the nicest possible way) about hung parliaments. What might happen if (joy of joys, so far as Paddy is concerned) Tony Blair or John Major have to sit idly silkily up alongside the Lib Dems and solicit their coalition support?

Paddy's answer, in our interview with him today, is rather curious: why, he wonders, should the Queen get to choose the Prime Minister? Why not get the House of Commons to choose the new PM, on (presumably) a free vote? Well, just think for a minute. Paddy. If the Commons is left to choose between Mr Major, Mr Blair and yours truly, it's a fair bet yours truly won't get a look in. But if the Queen had a free choice – well, now, she just might decide to favour a member of the offi-



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Teachers are taught the wrong things

Sir: It was with little surprise that I read that trainee teachers have lower A-level grades than any other group of university students (10 June). Ten years ago, having completed a first and higher degree at university, I took a one-year post-graduate primary teaching course at a college of higher education.

The warning signs were there at interview: the course director asked why someone like me (ie with a higher degree) wanted to teach primary age children. The course was extremely disappointing: intellectually undemanding, lacking in academic rigour and failing to provide really high-quality guidance in the complex skills of teaching. Too much time was spent playing with maths equipment, singing nursery rhymes and stapling pieces of paper neatly to walls and not enough on the really important things, such as how to address a class firmly and clearly, teach basic reading skills or deal with a disruptive child.

If this is what a one-year post-graduate course delivers then is it any wonder that anyone with high A-level grades looking for a challenging degree course is going to steer clear of a four-year BED, the course that provides two-thirds of primary school teachers?

I suppose the real problem is that primary education is fundamentally regarded as glorified childminding, a nice little job for a woman earning a second income, rather than something which requires a lively, intelligent mind and a high level of organisational and management skills.

PENNY McGEE
Evercreech, Somerset

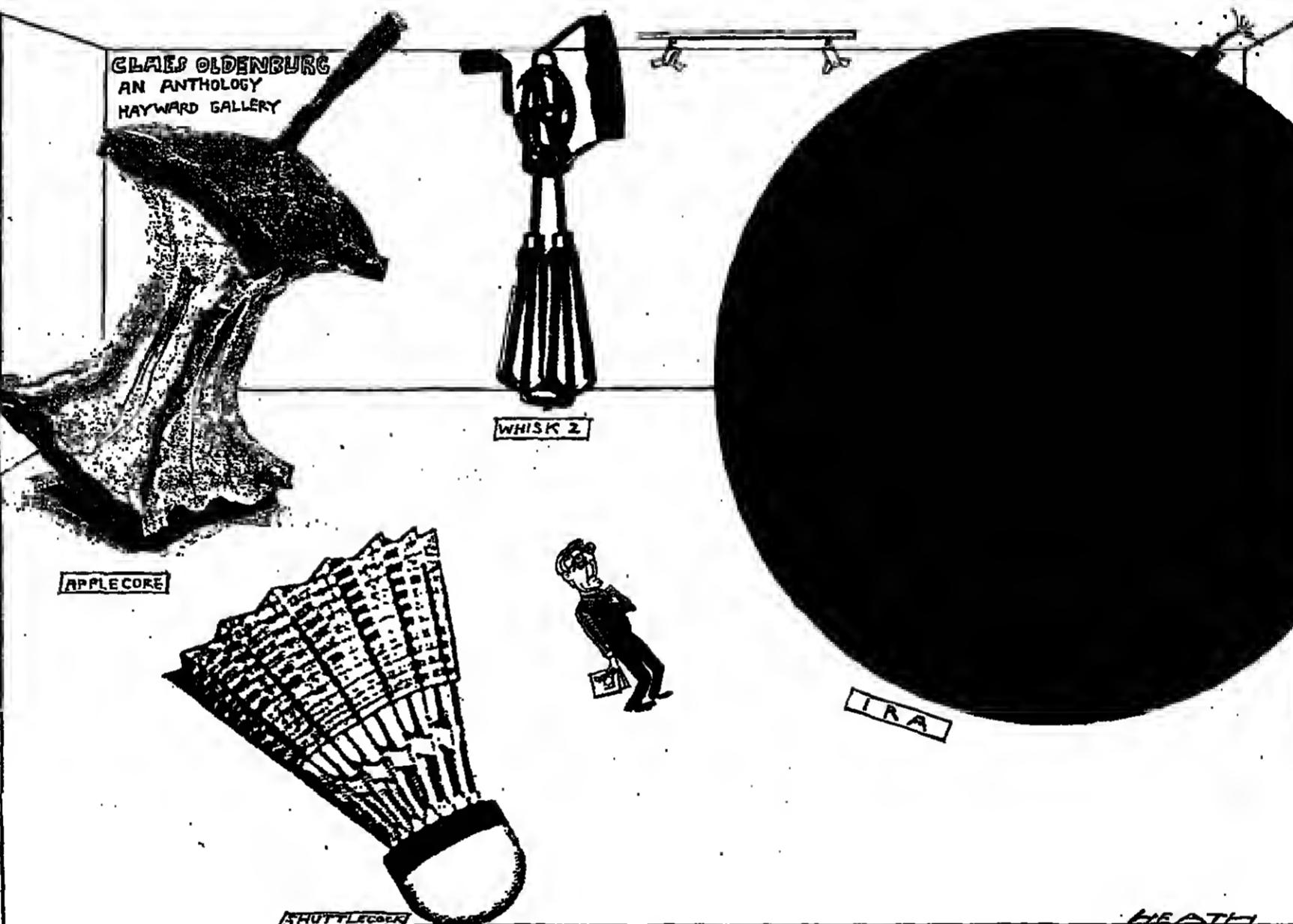
Sir: In your article on teacher training you refer to "popular subjects such as English, history and psychology." How is that geography always seems to get passed out of these not infrequent lists?

Last year, at GCSE level geography ranked seventh in the subject list of entrants with 295,229 candidates, 11.3 per cent up on 1994. History was next with 239,524, an increase of 5.3 per cent. In 1995 there was an increase of 10.3 per cent so geography is more than holding its own.

At A-level, geography had 43,426 entrants and ranked fifth as against history with 42,694 in sixth place.

Sterile statistics do not make great headlines but there does seem to be a bit of a blind spot about modern geography, which has long left the capes, bays and gazetteer attitudes behind. Geography, even at school level, has entered the world of applied studies in landscape management, marketing, tourism, transport systems, concept mapping, IT and urban development and planning. GEOFFREY SHERLOCK
The Geographical Association
Amersham,
Buckinghamshire

Sir: I am delighted by the younger generation and their choice of degree courses (report, 10 June). The "market" implemented by students shows a clear preference for traditional undergraduate degree subjects rather than those favoured by those who govern us. The prestige among young persons of both humanities and social sciences is especially encouraging. No doubt the present government, with its propensity to



ignore market signals when it suits, will continue to restrict growth in these disciplines through the system of student number funding.

J M OLIVER
London EC1

Sir: I was interested in your headline "Teaching trainees have worst A-levels" (10 June). It is a curious contradiction that we have a prime minister who is held up as an example of the meritocratic nature of our society precisely because he does not have a distinguished academic background. Can the Government please make up its mind which it regards as the most desirable?

JOHN CARTER
E-mail: sjpcd@ssu;bris.ac.uk

Sir: The Prime Minister seeks to impose a "grammar school in every town". An inspiring slogan. More inspiring than "four secondary moderns in every town"; and yet the policy is one and the same.

SIMON BRADLEY
London SE1

Myths about the Germans

Sir: The opinion poll referred to in Will Bennett's article "Children vote Germany as 'most boring'" (10 June) to shows a high level of ignorance of one of the most important states within the EU. To suggest that Germany is the most boring European state is a travesty of the truth.

Germany is, and always has been, a most stimulating European state but its historical and contemporary achievements have been overshadowed by constant

reference to the Nazi period. As someone who trained as a teacher of history in Scotland I found that the history curriculum was often heavily weighted against Germany, in that we taught children that the Germans were a warlike people while little or no reference was made to Germany's economic or cultural achievements.

Given the findings of the poll perhaps we should now be reviewing the school curriculum and reducing the amount of unintentional anti-German material taught to children. We should also give greater thought to the portrayal of Germany on television in this country.

Recent anti-European outpourings from British politicians, a band of recognised "Little Englanders", have had a definite anti-German tinge and this feeds into the minds of the children of this country.

The public impression of the Germans would seem to cling to apocryphal images of humourless Teutons who steal the best sunbathers at the swimming pool. This is a stereotype that requires urgent amelioration. Given the influence of Germany within the EU we can afford neither to ignore nor offend Germany.

Much has to be done in this country to improve the image of the Germans and of Germany. If our children hold such views of one of our closest allies and friends, what do their parents think?

STUART PHILIP
Department of Politics and International Relations
University of Aberdeen

Peter Cave
London EC1

Moral issues even in private

Sir: Peter Jay – with such certainty – identifies a moral boundary: consenting people's private behaviour *cannot* raise moral issues (Letters 10 June). Well, that immediately rules out any moral qualms about abortion, and if we get together – in private – and torture the pet goat, why, that's no moral issue at all. Oops, silly me, perhaps my educational deficiency is coming out: I must take as read – I hope – that Jay's morally neutral behaviour excludes embracing animal suffering.

Still, if we got together – in private – and one of us, aged 16, in depression, consents to the rest killing her, or injecting addictive drugs, that raises no moral issue. Ah, wrong again, I trust (my moral illiteracy showing) for the Jay dictum must surely accept explanatory expansion over quite what counts as consent.

Reasoned consent in no doubt, animals excluded, a couple privately wallow in extramarital carnal delights, safely under Jay's moral neutrality. Oops again! Even if spouses remain unaware of partners' infidelity, are we sure no harm is done, no moral issues raised?

The moral is not that private consensual assisted death, adultery, abortion and so on are never morally justified, but that they raise moral issues. Beware moral simplicities – maybe even this one.

PETER CAVE
London EC1

Investment in electricity

Sir: Diane Coyle's report (5 June) fails to recognise that capital investment by the privatised electricity companies is now 40 per cent higher compared with the five years prior to privatisation.

Capital investment has become more efficient and responsive to need. Since 1990 the industry has spent almost £16bn on improving the infrastructure and supply service. This is £4.5bn more than in the previous five years. In addition is the contribution from the independent generating companies. Nine major power stations have been developed since 1990 at a cost approaching £3bn at the cost by the end of 1996 costing £560m.

The expenditure on Sizewell B and the creation of cleaner, combined-cycle gas-turbine power stations, and the associated transmission network accounted for a peak in investment spending between 1991 and 1993. At the same time, customer service levels have improved while prices have fallen. The total saving on bills between 1992 and 1995 amounts to £2.5bn.

The electricity companies have not broken sell-off "pledges". The government assurance was that companies would be able to spend more on improving their services to customers. This the electricity industry has certainly achieved. PHILIP DAUBENBY
Chief Executive
The Electricity Association
London SW1

Flying in the face of logic

Sir: I suppose the thoughts that can be inspired by watching a fly buzzing around a room depend on the intellectual powers of the observer (letter, 7 June). A certain M Descartes, while musing on the movements of such a fly, realised that its position in space could be uniquely determined at any time by reference to three mutually perpendicular lines emanating from any corner of the room, and so invented cartesian co-ordinates. DAVID MILLER
Norwich

Sir: The energy expended by the fly is relative to its size and weight. In the five minutes Mr Webster has wasted watching it he might have run a mile or mown a small lawn. Ever seen a fly mowing a lawn? C T ERIKSEN
Worthing, West Sussex

Wrong numbers

Sir: One thing that grates with me is your lottery numbers column each Wednesday. The success of the lottery is, to a large part, due to the low level of numeracy in this country combined with the failure of people to understand fully the concept of randomness.

A random number is one that is not predictable. Previous numbers have absolutely no effect on future numbers. Your column promotes the opposite view. A serious newspaper should be informing and educating its readers not perpetuating myths.

PAUL BZOWSKI
Email: paul@uunet.uu.net

Bestseller

Sir: I read Jack O'Sullivan's "Irving and Sereny go to war" (6 June) and I have to take issue with David Irving's comment. "I was told the shop wouldn't be taking it because Günter Sereny's book on Albert Speer did so badly, which surprised me because I thought it had done well."

I can put on record that "Ihr Speer, Ihr Baule mit Trau" was a bestseller in every market we published it, both nationally and internationally. Its success has encouraged Waterstone's to pick up our new paperback if as their Book of the Month for August. This is the premier slot for any book published in that time. This adds to the hard-cover success of this internationally acclaimed work.

PETER STRAUS
Editor-in-Chief
Macmillan Publishers Ltd
London SW1

Forged writing

Sir: Ken Welshy has missed the main reason why joined-up writing is still taught in schools (Letters, 6 June). Most personal financial transactions still require signatures. Block writing is very easy to copy, while every person does joined up writing in a different style. That is why signatures are so hard to forge.

GAVIN BOOTH
St Saviour, Jersey



Jimmy's fixers: Sir James (centre) with (left, from the top) Jonathan Aitken MP, Lord Rees-Mogg and Sir David Frost; and (right, from the top) the gossip columnist Taki, Bill Cash MP and the Marchioness of Worcester, the society hostess

Inside the court of Sir James

The Anglo-French billionaire Sir James Goldsmith is an outsider with ways of exerting influence on the British Establishment. John Rentoul looks at his high-powered circle of friends

Sir James Goldsmith has the Conservative Party on the run. He was never a member of the Establishment, but he has invaded it by force of will and overwhelming wealth, and is now dictating terms to the oldest political party in the world.

The story of how this Anglo-French tax exile has managed to push his way into public life reveals much about the anatomy of power in Britain.

The first explanation, most obviously, is money. For a man who is said to have made £800m in one deal, the sort of sums spent on politics in Britain hardly ring his register. He is let it be known that he is prepared to spend £20m on his single-issue campaign for a referendum on Europe between now and the general election. That puts the Referendum Party, of which he is founder, leader and ideologist, on the same sort of footing as the Tory and Labour parties – and heavily outspending the Liberal Democrats.

When it is suggested that Sir James's threat to stand candidates against Tory MPs is not serious, Jeffrey Archer, the

Tory peer and former deputy party chairman, warns his friends: "James Goldsmith is a billionaire and he doesn't give a damn."

Sir James has also found a big issue: Europe. The reasons why he is bothered about Europe are not the usual ones, and his train of logic is sometimes difficult to follow. The root of his obsession is his concern about the effects of global capitalism.

As a supremely successful global capitalist himself, Sir James knows what he is talking about. It might be said that he is keen to preserve national identity that he has two of them: French and British. He certainly has little in common with the yeoman English patriots who form the backbone of Bill Cash's troops on the Tory backbenches. Sir James has two houses in Britain, one in Paris and a hacienda in Mexico. He is a member of the European Parliament for a French constituency and is father-in-law to Imran Khan, who may or may not want to be prime minister of Pakistan.

Sir James is animated by the logic of the world turning into a single economic system in which the peoples of Western

The train of his logic is sometimes difficult to follow

Europe will find themselves competing with the very lowest-wage countries. And his answer to that means dismantling the European Union and creating a different kind of trading block, protected from competition in world markets.

The first part of that programme is enough to excite the Eurosceptics, and Sir James is canny enough to focus on one thing at a time – a referendum on the terms of Britain's mem-

bership of the EU is an issue that can unite the largest coalition of support and cause maximum creative chaos in British politics.

The third form of leverage Sir James has on the Tory Party is social. He is well-connected with the Thatcherite wing. He is friends with the buccaneering capitalists who backed Margaret Thatcher, because they

thought she understood the free market and because she was not the Tory establishment. In the Seventies, Goldsmith, along with Lord Hanson, Gordon White and Jim Slater, stalked the City, making money, going to the same clubs and being seen with the same glamorous women.

Most of his friends are outsiders in some way, but they all have money. Jacob Rothschild and Mark Weintraub are members of the City establishment, although Kerry Packer, the Australian former media magnate, and John Aspinall, the zoologist and casino owner, are flamboyant mavericks.

"You could imagine the plans for the Referendum Party being hatched in the back room of Aspinall's casino," says one observer. It is the sort of grand and bizarre scheme that rich men would enjoy plotting.

Sir James Goldsmith's salon reflects his varied interests and influences. A key figure is the Marchioness of Worcester, a former actress and model who has elevated green talking-shops from squats and coffee bars to the grounds of her vast Gloucestershire estate. Known in environmental circles as plain Tracy Worcester, the Marchioness has long been a close friend of Sir James.

At her London townhouse, Cabinet ministers and Whitehall mandarins have tea with green activists. Guests have included Sir James and his brother Teddy, along with William Waldegrave and Brian Mawhinney, Charles Secret, of Friends of the Earth, and Sir Crispin Tickell, former ambassador to the UN and chairman of Earthwatch Europe.

Prior to the Referendum Party, Sir James was a passionate ecologist. His financial assistance to the Ecological Foundation kept it afloat in the early Seventies and helped Teddy to found the *Ecologist Magazine*. In 1976, he was awarded a knighthood for

"services to export and ecology".

One of his closest friends is John Aspinall. The pair met in 1949 while Aspinall was at Oxford. Later, they became partners in the Aspinall gaming clubs, which help to pay the £1m a year cost of running Aspinall's zoos in Kent.

Geoffrey Wansell, Goldsmith's biographer, recalls that Aspinall was a flamboyant Oxford undergraduate, who organised gambling parties.

"One of the regular players at Aspinall's tables was Teddy Goldsmith, and it was only to be expected that he would bring along his younger brother Jimmy," he recalls. Then aged 16, young Jimmy made an impression on the table of gamblers by losing almost £4,000, says Wansell.

Central to Goldsmith's circle of influence is his personal spin doctor, Patrick Robertson. At the age of 27, the founder of the ill-fated Bruges Group has already made a name for himself in right-wing circles. He has been credited with dreamt up the Referendum Party, a role he denies. "I did not work for the Referendum Party, but for Sir James Goldsmith personally," he said yesterday.

Other central figures in the Referendum Party include Judith Duckworth, a former Conservative Party agent who has recently been advising the New Democratic Party in Romania. Cheque-signing is the prerogative of Charles Filmer, a director of one of Goldsmith's companies and of the Referendum Party Ltd.

Another great friend is Jacob Rothschild, the investment banker who also chairs the National Heritage Memorial Fund. In 1984, Rothschild, Goldsmith and the Australian tycoon Kerry Packer formed a consortium to attempt to take over the St Regis Corporation, remaining close confidants ever since. Rothschild has said of Goldsmith: "Jimmy is com-

pletely international ... People aren't used to dealing with someone who is as independent and outspoken as he is. He doesn't compromise, he isn't accommodating to the second-rate, and he doesn't like people who are hide-bound, or do nothing of interest."

And then he has access to the next part of the "amplification machine" – the media. He is on close personal terms with

He is on close personal terms with important media figures

important media figures, especially – but not exclusively – in the Euro-sceptic right-wing press. There is a *Now* magazine diaspora of journalists who worked on Goldsmith's failed glossy right-wing weekly during its brief life in the early Eighties, including Frank Johnson, now editor of the *Spectator*.

Sir James's party invitation lists include Conrad Black, proprietor of the *Telegraph*, Nigel Dempster, who used to live close to his Richmond mansion, and William Rees-Mogg, the former editor of the *Times*.

Lord Rees-Mogg once wrote admiringly: "Over the years I have become an experienced observer of charisma: the best indicator is the way in which the public approaches the candidate... People were coming up to Jimmy Goldsmith in just this way. It was like observing Margaret Thatcher at a Conservative Party conference, or Ronald Reagan in the Republican primaries of 1980."

Sir David Frost's status as a member of the inner circle was also confirmed when he joined Sir James at his palatial Mexico home for a holiday over Easter just before Sir James

appeared on his programme.

The honour of an invitation to Mexico has also been extended to Sir Charles Powell, Margaret Thatcher's political secretary. Sir Charles and his wife, Lady Carla, attended both of Sir James's recent big social events – the party at the Ritz two years ago to celebrate his election as a Euro-MP and his wife's 60th birthday, also attended by the Princess of Wales, and the wedding of his daughter Jemima, Diana's

friend.

Although Sir James holds unconventional economic views – he is closer to fellow billionaire-politician Ross Perot in opposing free trade and advocating protection – his social connections with right-wing business people intersect with the Thatcheries' anti-Europeanism.

Sir James's social connections with right-wing Tories were advertised by his invitation to the gracious Georgian home of the former Cabinet minister Jonathan Aitken in Lord North Street on Monday night.

Sir James apparently only made one comment in the debate on a presentation by Norman Lamont, the former Chancellor, on the question of whether Britain should pull out of the EU. But he was there, in a private discussion group which included Government ministers.

The Goldsmith-Thatcherite network was pulled together in the European Foundation, the anti-Maastricht think-tank chaired by Bill Cash and supported by "substantial" donations from Sir James. On its advisory board sit Lord McAlpine, the former Tory treasurer who regards Baroness Thatcher as so betrayed that the party might benefit from a spell in opposition; Robin Harris, of Lady Thatcher's policy unit and drafter of her memoirs; and Ian Duncan-Smith, a Euro-sceptic MP close to John Redwood.

The final reason why Sir James has such a hold on the Tory party is obvious – that the Government is unpopularity. MPs may say they do not believe opinion polls, but you can be sure that the 175 who would lose their seats on present poll ratings are worried.

They take very seriously anything that could reduce their vote at the general election, and Sir James's threat to stand candidates against any MP who is not committed to his idea of a referendum – not just one on a single European currency – is one of the few things they could do something about.

Sir James insists that his initiative is neither left-wing nor right-wing, and it is true that some of his analysis of the evils of globalisation chimes better with the Labour Party's themes. But Labour MPs and candidates do not have to pay attention: they are winning. And besides, the Euro-sceptic theme is more likely to play with disillusioned Tory voters than old-style Labour anti-marketeers. Sir James's candidates only need to win 1.5 per cent of the vote to deprive the Tories of 12 seats.

Sir James may only be playing at politics, but he has the money, the issue and the connections to be a serious player. Some regard his views as dangerous. He certainly lacks neither opinions nor the language in which to express them. In his book *The Trap* he warned of the consequences of global free trade causing social divisions "deeper than anything ever envisaged by Marx". More recently he described the Government's signing of the Maastricht treaty as "tantamount to treason".

Others take a different view. One Tory MP said yesterday: "He pricks our consciences and shows our intellectual inadequacy."

Additional research by Ros Wynne-Jones.

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Legal & General

What's Auntie got up her sleeve?

Heilo. People seem very unclear about what Mr John Birt's new reforms mean, writes Ralph Treadwell, the BBC's new Deputy Controller of *Logic*, so let me try to explain very simply.

First, let me clear up one misunderstanding. John Birt is not the same person as John Bird. John Birt is the Director-General of the BBC and John Bird is a small, plump actor who looks nothing like him at all! You may be thinking of John Fortune, John Bird's partner, a tall, thin man with a convincing line in plausible gobbledegook. He might well be mistaken for John Birt.

Right. Now, what are we trying to do with these reforms? Well, basically, we are continuing the market-driven reforms that we have already initiated. Now, what are the market-driven reforms we have already initiated and which we are hoping to continue with these

new reforms? Well, our policy under this new Birtian revolution has been to locate our areas of excellence and then to sell them off. This means that wherever we have found something or someone that works really well, we have closed it down or sold it off so that we can hire them or it back privately at much greater expense.

One example might be the Christchurch studio in Bristol, which we had expensively restored and equipped as one of the finest drama radio studios anywhere in the world. Once we had got it up and running, we transferred the drama department to Birmingham and closed Christchurch down. Actions like this were repeated all over the country. People were put in charge of whole regions whose sole function and sole talent was to fire people, make them go independent and hire themselves back to the BBC.

One name we thought of

got at Radio 4 to budget for all the stuff going out on Long Wave! So suddenly they had a shortfall of millions of pounds! I don't know why we keep saying that the BBC is saving money under John Birt when we are hemorrhaging this sort of cash!

Miles Kington

for this was "producer choice". This was a way of saying that the preferred choice was no longer available and the producer would have to think of something else.

In the short term this is, of course, more expensive. But in the long term it is more expensive, too. Thus we see a symmetry in our plans and we also can justify asking for more money. This is especially necessary ever since we found that Radio 4 was overspent by millions of pounds. And do you know why this was? It was because they for

funny, while *Newsnight* with Jeremy Paxman has high entertainment value and little news.

Now, I know that people have got their doubts about the merging of radio and TV. They say that radio and TV are two very different animals, with different methods. They say that Radio 4 is streets ahead of BBC 2. I have very great respect for this view. That is why we are ignoring it with such a show of crocodile tears. The plain fact is that radio comes up with all the good ideas that later get turned into TV programmes, so by merging them we can get those ideas sooner!

I don't think Oscar is quite sticking to the market-driven agenda, writes Veronica Longstaff, the BBC's new Head of Management and Internal Memos, so let me put it a little differently. Programmes are all very well in their own way, but ...

The debate continues ...

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

الإسكندرية

the commentators

Medical advances have reduced the numbers of disabled children. But when they fail, should the NHS pay up?

Christina O'Sullivan has a three-year-old son with spina bifida. Like a rapidly growing number of people she is suing the NHS for what used to be regarded as an accident of nature. She has just filed a suit accusing her hospital, Northwick Park in London, of failing to detect his abnormality in an ultrasound test during her pregnancy. Her son will be handicapped for life and unable to walk.

This raises a great many difficult issues. One response has been an objection to her apparently contradictory state of mind. She says she loves him dearly but "would rather have had an abortion than see him the way he is". A number of observers, especially those who are against abortion and some disabled rights activists, protest that you cannot both love and value a person and wish they had never been born. They talk in terms of "genocide" or the less than perfect.

But Christina's case rests on the time when she was given the ultrasound test and her son did not exist as a person to be loved, only as a potential person. At that stage, she says, had she been faced with the agonising news, she would have made the decision to abort – but that does not devalue her protective love for her child now he is born.

Most mothers confronted with news that their baby will be severely

abnormal choose to have it aborted. Most mothers faced with the unexpected birth of a handicapped child love it as much as any other. However, the chance to know whether a foetus may be badly disabled is one of the greatest blessings of modern medicine. After all, knowledge is optional – women can chose not to know.

The official figures tell the story: in 1982, 1,016 babies were born with severe abnormalities of the central nervous system: spina bifida, anencephaly, or hydrocephalus. That represented 16.1 per 10,000 births. Ten years later, the number of babies born with these devastating conditions had dropped to one quarter of that number, just 4.6 per 10,000 births, mainly because screening gave women the chance to choose abortion.

But all too quickly modern miracles such as ante-natal screening turn into "rights" and patients who fail to get as much benefit out of them as they feel they should turn litigious. Where once Christina O'Sullivan would have accepted her fate as horrible bad luck, now she has found someone to blame. The

hospital admits that her son's condition could have been diagnosed from the ultrasound test she had, but it was not detected. She feels entitled to sue Northwick Park because she is a single mother who needs the money to care for him.

She is not the first – there have been a clutch of such cases. The hospital's lawyers say that most have failed, though some parents have won substantial damages. Legally these cases turn on an odd point of law. If a child has cerebral palsy because of the negligence of a doctor's clumsy delivery at the birth, then the child can sue for its pain, suffering and loss of amenity. But in screening cases, the child cannot sue because it cannot argue in court that it should never have been born.

Instead, its parents sue for the cost of bringing up the child, which will be considerably less than the huge sums sometimes paid out for cerebral palsy caused by negligence. The relatively new art of ante-natal testing has given rise to a plethora of litigation. Perversely, the more expert the doctors become and the better they become at detecting abnormalities, the more

vulnerable they are to law suits when they fail – although nearly every medical test will give some false negative or false positive results.

Take Carol Anderson, for example. She claims she was told after an ultrasound scan that her child had severe water on the brain, or hydrocephalus. "When I was 17 weeks pregnant, they strongly advised me to terminate," she says. "But I wouldn't. I am a Catholic and I am against abortion. I went through my pregnancy believing I was carrying a badly handicapped baby, but when she was born she was perfect. If I had listened to what they said, she wouldn't be here now." So she started proceedings against the hospital. What for? "For the stress I suffered," she says.

more horrified by the idea of aborting a healthy child, while others will regard having an unwanted handicapped child as far worse. Either way, getting the wrong answer causes terrible grief. However, the total sum of suffering was far worse in the days before ultrasound was invented.

So how accurate are these antenatal screening programmes? Dr Henry Irving, president of the British Medical Ultrasound Society, gives the rather startling reply that no one knows: there are no national figures. Various surveys have been carried out by some regions on their own results, but there is no national benchmark for accuracy. Nor is there any nationally agreed method of testing – some areas still use AFP blood tests, others only use ultrasound. Some hospitals have excellent new equipment, while others do not.

Doctors, says Dr Irving, will always tell patients what they consider the risk of abnormality in being.

If Christina O'Sullivan gets a large sum, what general good does that serve? The law may keep the NHS on its toes, but the culture of litigation drains its resources, makes doctors practice defensive medicine and turns every medical advancement into a new chance to sue.

POLLY TOYNBEE

The more expert the doctors become, the more vulnerable they are to lawsuits

vulnerable they are to law suits when they fail – although nearly every medical test will give some false negative or false positive results.

In another case, Karen and Mark Southwell are suing the Princess Anne Hospital in Southampton for advising them to abort a foetus they now believe would have turned out to be healthy. (The hospital, as is often the case, claims the baby would have been born severely abnormal.) Some people will be

The world's favourite cartel

An alliance between British Airways and American Airlines would increase prices and reduce services, says Richard Branson

For the past 16 years Britain and the United States have professed to want to "liberate" airline travel around the world, and across the Atlantic in particular. After the demise of Laker Airlines in 1982 – at the hands of a cartel led by British Airways and with the connivance of American and European carriers – along came Virgin. Since 1984 we have fought tigerishly to get into every market across the Atlantic and offer the consumer a better deal. The result? Fares on all the routes on which we fly are lower and the quality of service has risen, often dramatically.

It is hard to believe that any national government would want to throw all that away. Yet all this is at risk. Both the UK and US governments are considering allowing the world's two most powerful airlines to forge an alliance that would give them a 100 per cent market share on some routes – and an average 60 per cent on all UK-US routes. In no other industry in the capitalist world would the creation of such a monopolistic alliance be tolerated.

What will the result be? Fares will rise and the quality of service for passengers will fall. Instead of "open skies" – the professed policy on both sides of the Atlantic – the two governments will have presided over the creation of the Aeroflot of the capitalist West.

Of course, any proposed alliance between BA and American Airlines will require anti-trust immunity from the US authorities. This would be the American equivalent of banning the Monopolies and Mergers Commission from investigating the activities of the two companies. As the MMC is already barred from looking into BA (British airlines and sugar beet production are the only two industries so exempt) this would mean that the most powerful cartel in aviation history would be given carte blanche to behave as it wants in the marketplace.

The hypocrisy of it all will not be lost on those recalling the words of Robert Ayling, BA's chief executive, as he outlined his objections – yes, objections – to plans by Lufthansa and United Airlines for a similar sharing arrangement in March. "What Lufthansa want to do is to reduce the level of competition by relaxing the

anti-trust laws," he said. Adding to the irony of his objection is that Lufthansa and United flew less than 14 per cent of all scheduled flights between the whole of Europe and the US, whereas BA and AA, who now propose a far more extensive link-up, last year flew more than 60 per cent of all British flights and 30 per cent of all European flights to America.

The nub of the deal between the two airlines is what the industry calls "code-sharing". This is where one operator can sell tickets on another's flights, allowing an airline to sell tickets on routes on which it does not operate. This practice has been condemned as "profoundly anti-competitive". By whom? Robert Crandall, American's chairman, who claims that they none the less have to adopt the practice to stave off rivals.

It beggars belief that any immunity for these two monopolists could possibly be considered. But we hear that the trade-off for creating

Aeroflot Mark 2 is going to be "open skies to Heathrow"; in other words, letting all US carriers into the busiest of airports. But anyone who knows how Heathrow works knows that despite this quid pro quo the BA/AA duopoly will still control most of the slots for take-offs and landings. "Open skies" then becomes just an empty slogan.

The brutal and sad fact is that trying to get into Heathrow – as Virgin knows to its cost – means a wearying wait. It was in 1992 that we first applied for slots to Johannesburg. Four years later, we have just been awarded three openings for the coming winter. And Virgin has also applied for many other routes (including the Heathrow to Chicago route, where BA and AA have a 94 per cent share) only to be rejected. Not only is Heathrow full, but it also operates a system of "grandfather" rights, where those that were first in enjoy the greatest access irrespective of their merit.

The market power of the duopolists will be enormous. They will control the crucial feeder services of almost every transatlantic route and thus be able to inflict unfair influence on consumer choice by manipulating commissions paid to travel agents.

British Airways and American Airlines already



Close formation: the two most powerful airlines want to form an alliance, but it could create a capitalist version of an Aeroflot-style state monopoly

enjoy huge monopolistic advantages; this deal will just increase those advantages at the cost of real and meaningful competition.

The implications of the deal are so vast they must be subject to a wide-ranging public debate. The competition authorities (such as they exist) and the Civil Aviation Authority should be called on to examine the alliance in detail and publish their findings. Above all, the criterion for judging whether or not to approve the deal should be solely what is best for the travelling public, not the shareholders of these two giants.

It is well known that Virgin and BA have had strong differences in the past, to put it mildly. But that is not what is at stake here. This is not sour grapes; it is not about Virgin. The issue is the competitive future of air travel. If nothing is done,

if this unholy alliance is allowed, then there will be no more competition, there will not be lower fares. Instead, we will see a return to the grim old days of cartels and monopolies what the past chairman of the CAA Christopher Chataway described as the "culture of collusion".

Airlines such as British Airways did not achieve what they have by providing low fares and high-quality services. Just remember how awful they used to be until forced to compete! If the public had woken up to hear that BA and Virgin had merged, they would probably be pretty outraged. This deal is even worse.

So if any consumers hearing the news of yesterday's deal are tempted to crack open the champagne, my advice is: don't. This return to the aviation Dark Ages is nothing to celebrate.

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Please Sir, can you spare a dime?

Our children are being taught to count with American software, but Nicholas Tucker sees no cause for alarm

long after such terms had become museum pieces. He would never have guessed that British pop music would one day influence what American teenagers listened to, although he certainly would have hated what we produce here just as much.

Other Cassandra voices sounding off against American domination have followed different agendas. The Comic Campaign Council in the 1950s

that worked successfully to ban American horror comics was mostly made up of active Communist Party members – a fact unknown all that time to its innocent chairman George Pumphrey, a Sussex headmaster.

Bashing America has long been an acceptable tactic for the far left, always ready to discredit the home of rampant capitalism whenever the chance arose.

They were often joined in this endeavour by members of the extreme right, typified by Evelyn Waugh, who on hearing the views of a distinguished literary critic merely replied that since the gentleman concerned was also an American there was consequently no need to take his opinion seriously.

The driving force here was quite different: a vision of feudal Britain where any transatlantic term or twang was an

uncomfortable reminder that time had moved on with the world – and Britain's former place in it was diminished. How else can one explain the occasional case of irrational fury over odd Americanisms in the language, so brilliantly parodied by Michael Frayn writing in the guise of Lord Disgusted in 1963? "Every time I hear the word

British culture has always been a hotch-potch, borrowing from abroad when the mood arises

'commuter' I can see a red haze of rage in front of my eyes. It is an entirely unnecessary outrage, since there is a perfectly good English expression: A man who lives in one place and works in another, and who travels back and forth between the two each day. There is simply no need for a new word."

A more serious worry exists over the future of British children's literature.

Almost all children's authors over here produce books with at least half an eye on the American market, our own – badly damaged by government cuts to schools and libraries – is no longer able to support a thriving children's literature industry by itself. The type of changes that arise are still fairly minimal: a case of changing a few names around and avoiding issues American publishers tend to be more sensitive about than are our own publishers. But should all children's books start disappearing in favour of videos and the multi-media, there would be a problem.

A country and culture that cannot recognise itself in its own stories risks becoming invisible. *Pocahontas*, *The Lion King* and *Aladdin* are all right in their way, but it is reasonable to expect British children to find some reflection of their own background and habits in their entertainment. In the literature that exists today there is no problem: we produce the best picture books in the world, with some fine novels to turn to later. But for children dependent entirely upon the screen, good home-grown productions are few and far between among the avalanche of feeble cartoon shows and American films now dominating the

home television and video market. Should we therefore put up the same type of defence against cultural invasion so heroically mounted by the French in the Gatt trade negotiations of recent memory? It is a tempting idea, if we could only first agree among ourselves what exactly British culture truly is. As always, this is not easy. Charles Dickens, the epitome of British reading tastes in the 19th century, was ousted at the time by G.W.M. Reynolds with novels like *Liver of the Haven*. The BBC, once seen as the true voice of Britain, used to lose out to the commercial Radio Luxembourg in audience numbers even when broadcasting was in its heyday. Who – or what – most stands for British taste in these two examples?

British culture has always been a hotch-potch, borrowing from abroad when the mood arises. The trick is to absorb the alien before the alien absorbs us. But whether the dollars, dimes and nickels so disliked by Dr Tate are really a national threat may be doubted. In this particular case, it could even be that pupils tired of failing arithmetic tests based on our own currency might find the whole idea of thinking in American money interesting and novel enough to start doing better!

The writer is lecturer in child psychology and children's literature at Sussex University.

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Forget about Europe for a moment. The perennial establishment anxiety about undue American influence on British culture is back in the news. The spokesman this time is Dr Nick Tate, head of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The chief focus of his worry is the flood of American software into schools, where pupils are now expected to practise mathematics by working in dollars, dimes and cents and take English tests sprinkled with spellings such as color, gray and mom.

Schools use American software because we do not have the market or capital to develop our own educational materials on anything like the same scale. Some spilling over of Americanism is therefore inevitable, just as it always has been in our American-dominated film world. But despite dire warnings in the past and the brief existence of the mid-Atlantic accent in the late 1940s, Britain still remains very much itself. There may be more hamburgers and colas on sale than before, but we still walk on pavements (not sidewalks), go to the cinema (not the movies) and take out the rubbish (not the garbage) at night.

American influences can also go as well as come. The Cambridge pundit FR Leavis used to warn his students against "cromers" and the noxious effects of listening to what he would always insist on calling "boogie-woogie"

BA and American create air superpower

DAVID USBORNE AND MAGNUS GRIMOND

British Airways and American Airlines yesterday ran into a storm of protest after unveiling plans for a highly ambitious code-sharing agreement that would create the world's largest aviation alliance with the power to transform competition between Europe and the United States.

Under the arrangement, announced simultaneously in London by BA's chief executive, Bob Ayling, and in New York by his American counterpart, Robert Crandall, the two airlines would splice together their schedules and share flight codes to forge

a single network of routes around the world. But the alliance will be the subject of close scrutiny from competition authorities on both sides of the Atlantic and rivals were quick to warn yesterday of the dangers to competition.

Virgin's Richard Branson immediately condemned the deal as anti-competitive. Delta Air Lines, the third-biggest carrier, said it would oppose the alliance unless Britain and the US reached agreement on an "open-skies" agreement to further open up Heathrow airport to US airlines. Continental Airlines and the Dutch operator KLM were others that expressed unease at the link-up.

with only USAir, in which BA has a 34.6 per cent stake, saying it would open up new opportunities.

The deal was welcomed by the stock market, which marked BA's shares 9p higher to 562p. Chris Tarry, an analyst with Kleinwort Benson Securities, described it as a major step. "It is likely to mark a greater willingness on the part of the UK to have a more liberal [open-skies] agreement. But it also opens the way for Virgin and others to wrest concessions," he said.

The link-up means that from April next year passengers booking with BA to the US, for instance, could find themselves on an American Airlines flight. Among those planes carrying both BA and American flight codes will be Concorde.

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Instant criticism of the deal was provided by Richard Branson, whose Virgin Atlantic Airways, described as harsh new conditions across the Atlantic. "Given the history of these two airlines and their anti-competi-

tive behaviour, it would be hard to believe any rational government, in the interest of consumers, would allow this to go forward," he said.

Already among the world's most powerful airlines, BA and American would together account for almost 60 per cent of traffic between Britain and the US. Between Kennedy airport in New York and Heathrow their share is 70 per cent, while they are the only carriers on the London-to-Dallas route.

Analysts predicted that the two companies will be expected at the very least to carry out some routes where their domination would be unacceptable, in



Shake on it: BA director Roger Maynard (left) with American Airlines chief executive Robert Crandall. Photograph: Roger

Comment, page 17

Controversy greets head of Exchange

PATRICK TOOHER

The Stock Exchange yesterday ended a five-month search for a new chief executive when it named Gavin Casey to replace Michael Lawrence, who was ousted in January after bitter clashes over his management style. But controversy soon surrounded Mr Casey's appointment when details of his role in the infamous Blue Arrow affair in the 1980s resurfaced.

The Stock Exchange chairman John Kemp-Welch said: "We have been rigorous and thorough in checking this matter with the relevant regulatory authorities and we are satisfied he had no more than a peripheral role [in the Blue Arrow affair]. There was no criticism of him in the [DTI] report."

Mr Casey, 49, was deputy chief executive of County Nat West when the merchant bank launched Blue Arrow's £837m rights issue in 1987 that led to a fraud trial four years later.

He denied being closely involved in the unsuccessful rights issue and rejected allegations made on behalf of one defendant during the trial that he had

"run for cover" when the official investigation into affair began. "I strongly refuted those suggestions at the time and I do so again," he said yesterday.

It was alleged that City advisers bought into the Blue Arrow rights issue to bail out the recruitment agency after realising the cash call would flop.

The Court of Appeal quashed convictions of four financiers linked with the rights issue four years ago.

Mr Casey joined Smith New Court in 1989, and became chief operating officer before the broker was bought by Merrill Lynch last year. He has since played a key role in the integration of the two businesses.

"He is a proven manager of change," Mr Kemp-Welch said. "He will lead the executive team in the implementation of the Exchange's strategy, which is now close to being finalised."

The appointment comes at a crucial time for the Exchange, which is nearing momentous changes that will introduce a new electronic system of trading stakes.

The Exchange is transforming its current trading system



'Refuted suggestions' over Blue Arrow: Gavin Casey, the new Stock Exchange chief

Photograph: Philip Meech

from a quote-driven one where prices are displayed electronically but deals done by phone, to an order-driven system with electronic matching of trades.

The move threatens the traditional privileges given to market-making firms. However, Mr Casey denied his association with the broker would colour his view of the debate. "I have no strong theological position either way," he said.

Mr Casey is the Exchange's third chief executive in as many years. Both Mr Lawrence, who was paid a basic salary of £345,000 and received a £500,000 pay-off plus his predecessor, Peter Rawlins, were sacked. Mr

Rawlins left in 1993 amid controversy over the Taurus electronic share settlement system, which was abandoned at an estimated cost to the City of £400m. But Mr Kemp-Welch denied the chief executive's position was a poisoned chalice. "There was no shortage of people interested in doing the job," he said.

Comment, page 17

A final record for Thorn-EMI

MATHEW HORSMAN

Media Editor

Perennial takeover candidate Thorn-EMI yesterday unveiled record profits up 27 per cent, in its last set of figures before splitting into two separate companies this summer.

But there was continuing speculation in the City that a hostile bid for the music-to-rentals conglomerate could interrupt the divorce proceedings.

"EMI is virtually the only major record company that isn't owned by a media conglomerate," said one leading analyst. Disney, the US entertainment juggernaut, continued to be a favourite potential bidder. The theme-parks-to-broadcasting company is one of the few US giants without a recording label.

Simon Duffy, group finance director, said yesterday that the company had not received any approaches. "If we did, of course we would consider what was in the best interests of shareholders."

Potential buyers could wait, however, until Thorn and EMI Group are trading separately before launching a bid. The demerger will be put to shareholders on 10 August, and Thorn is expected to begin trading separately the morning of 19 August, the company revealed yesterday.

Pre-tax profits soared to £539m in the year to 31 March,

from £424m last time, buoyed by record sales at EMI Music and solid growth in its rentals division.

The results cheered analysts, who predicted double-digit growth for both EMI Group and Thorn, the two successor companies.

"We didn't massage the figures in advance of the demerger," Mr Duffy said yesterday. "We just let the chips fall where they might."

The shares gained 5p to close at 1,843p, compared with analysts' estimates of 1,20-a-share for the two companies following the demerger. If shareholders approve the split they will be offered one new share in Thorn, the rentals company, for every Thorn-EMI share they own. Analysts expect Thorn shares to trade sharply below those of

EMI Group, which, as a pure music and retail play, would fetch a higher market rating. The two companies will divide net debt of £391.4m, with Thorn taking £260m. Both are expected to follow progressive dividend policies in line with present practice.

Thorn-EMI declared a final dividend of 29.5p, or 40p for the whole year.

Senior executives working for Thorn following the demerger will receive new options, while EMI executives will see their current options repriced to reflect the relative value of the new shares.

Sir Colin Southgate, who has overseen the radical restructuring of Thorn-EMI over the last 10 years, will be chairman of both companies, although he is expected to be eventually re-

Barings faces mass defections in equities

NIC CICUTI

ING Barings, the merchant bank rescued after its collapse at the hands of rogue trader Nick Leeson, is facing the prospect of mass defections from its specialist equities teams following the recent recruitment of more than 50 staff by its rival Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

The bank is already suing its German rival in New York, after it poached a key member of staff there, encouraging a wave of departures.

At least 25 more Barings employees, members of its Asian desk in London, are now thought to be vulnerable to six and seven-figure salaries now on offer if they sign up with one of their unnamed rivals.

Barings' problems come in the wake of a rapid ratcheting up of City salaries in the past year, leading to poaching on a massive scale as many major banks move to position themselves within the international market place.

The latest threatened defections follow the departure of Andrew Fraser, former head of Barings Asia team, who has left to join Standard Chartered Securities.

Mr Fraser, who is banned from approaching staff under the terms of his departure, is believed to have been joined by Andrew Clark, another Barings sales trader.

Several of the Asian team in London are already thought to have been approached by at least one major bank. Barings yesterday would not comment on whether approaches had been made and what the outcome was.

A bank source said that in current conditions, with poachers circling ING Barings, it was not surprising that members of staff were being contacted.

"It is bloody irritating to have people picked off like that," he said. "When we identify those whom we regard as key, we make a point of talking to them to ask if they have been approached. We look at them in the eye and ask them to tell us that they are staying."

Although it was not possible for Barings to match the huge double or triple-salary increases that some are being offered by some banks, potential defectors were being given an indication of the "generous" bonuses they might expect next year.

Some staff who did not necessarily want to leave were being placed in an impossible position because everyone around them was going and they felt their team would be disbanded, the source added.

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*One hour index 1 pence at 1200 hours

1995 Daily Index 1200 hours

1995 Daily Index 1200 hours

Indices Class Day's change Change (%) 1995 High 1995 Low Yield (%)

FTSE 100 3755.70 +26.90 +0.7 3857.10 3639.50 4.04

Dollar Yesterday Change Year Ago

FTSE 250 4462.30 +9.70 +0.2 4568.60 4015.30 3.39

UK 5.81 6.18 8.03

Yester Day Change Year Ago

FTSE 350 1888.80 +11.50 +0.6 1945.40 1818.60 3.89

US 5.44 6.18 6.97

Long Bond (%)

FT Small Cap 2239.41 -3.51 -0.2 2244.38 1954.06 2.91

5.12 7.10 6.55

10 Year (%)

FT All Share 1885.10 +10.23 +0.5 1924.17 1781.98 3.81

5.34 7.12 6.70

30 Year (%)

New York * 5713.73 +25.86 +0.5 5778.00 5032.94 2.16

5.50 7.12 6.70

10 Year (%)

Tokyo 21817.82 +98.47 +0.5 22282.05 19734.70 0.73

5.12 7.12 6.70

10 Year (%)

Hong Kong 10993.55 -149.69 -1.3 11594.99 10204.87 3.30†

5.12 7.12 6.70

10 Year (%)

Frankfurt 2546.35 -12.48 -0.5 2570.70 2253.38 1.85†

5.12 7.12 6.70

10 Year (%)

Source: FT Information

*One hour index 1 pence at 1200 hours

1995 Daily Index 1200 hours

1995 Daily Index 1200 hours

Indices Class Day's change Change (%) 1995 High 1995 Low Yield (%)

NFC 171 20 13.2 Jamsetji 112 4 3.4

10 Year (%)

Salvation Christian 258 15 6.2 Provident Park 442 15 3.3

10 Year (%)

10 Year (%)

Sage Group 500 22 4.6 Berlitz 197 5 2.5

10 Year (%)

10 Year (%)

Source: FT Information

10 Year (%)

10 Year (%)

Source: FT Information

Behind the code, a behemoth of the skies is born

COMMENT

'This is international concentration of an industry almost without precedent, and all without that tiresome and expensive business of full-blooded merger'

If you cannot beat them, join them. Robert Crandall, chief executive of American Airlines, once famously described code sharing as "profoundly anti-competitive". Since then there has been a host of such agreements, and despite their anti-competitive nature, they have all tended to win regulatory approval, the quid pro quo being that the two countries involved give up fiercely protected landing rights. Now comes the big daddy of them all - a code sharing arrangement between British Airways and, yes, American Airlines.

Code sharing is jargon for the ability of one airline to transfer its passengers on to the other's network. In essence, the two companies become one, for code sharing plainly requires extensive co-operation between participants on pricing, marketing and most other things that make an airline tick.

British Airways is the largest international carrier in the world. American is the third largest internationally and the second largest overall. Between them they have nearly 60 per cent of UK-US traffic, which accounts for the bulk of transatlantic traffic generally. And between them they create a potential network of some 36,000 destinations. It can readily be seen that what is proposed is the creation of a behemoth with the capacity to crush most opposition before it.

In most industries such a proposal would be so outrageous as to be laughable. But airlines, with their closely guarded national landing rights and internationally agreed pricing structures, have never obeyed the

normal rules of competition. It may well be that code sharing is no worse than the bilateral international agreements that went before. The trail has also been blazed to the extent that it is now so well trodden as to be a virtually open motorway. KLM has linked with North West, Delta with a cluster of European airlines including Virgin, and Lufthansa has tied itself up with United and others. This is international concentration of an industry almost without precedent, and all without that tiresome and expensive business of full-blooded merger.

From a commercial point of view it obviously makes sense. Both American and British Airways have spoken out fiercely against it, but they could hardly resist while everyone else merrily moves ahead regardless. The question is whether the tie up between two of the world's biggest is the code sharing too far, especially given their key transatlantic businesses.

Richard Branson and quite a few of the other pilot fish forced to swim with the sharks, thinks it is. He points to the hypocrisy of two companies which complained bitterly about the anti-competitive nature of Lufthansa's tie up with United. Now, apparently, the scales have fallen from their eyes and it is perfectly alright to engage in such antics. That's commerce for you. And it may well be that the carrot being offered to US regulators of open access to Heathrow, plus those treasured fifth freedom rights, if that is what the British authorities are prepared

to offer, is enough to do the trick. While competition is taken away with one hand, it is increased with the other. That is what they would like you to believe, anyway.

End of a marriage made in hell

It is not often that a business is so bad that the vendor has to pay the buyer to take it away. But such is the case with Do It All, a DIY joint venture so botched that it would shame any weekend hammer and chisel enthusiast. Do It All has swallowed up £60m-plus in losses and a further £75m in investment since being formed in 1989. Now WH Smith is paying Boots a thumping £63.5m to take control of its 50 per cent share. It has been an expensive failure.

Do It All was always known as the marriage made in hell. It took two of the weakest players in the market and created, hey presto, an even weaker one. While rivals such as B&Q and Sainsbury's Homebase gained market share, Do It All's mounting losses became a rising source of embarrassment to two of Britain's largest retailers.

Perhaps the salutary lesson here is that joint ventures are a hard trick to pull off. Shared responsibility and split costs sound good when things are going well. But when the going gets tough, differences of opinion and strategy are bound to emerge. Given these problems, it is a wonder Boots and

WH Smith put up with each other for as long as they did. Part of the answer to why things have moved so suddenly to divorce lies in the change of regime at WH Smith. The new chief has found it easier to make a clean break than his predecessor, who was naturally more emotionally involved in the tie-up.

WH Smith is paying a heavy price to rid itself of the burden but it can now concentrate on other issues, not least resolving the problems in its core chain. Boots on the other hand has its work cut out. Its decision is a calculated gamble on continued improvement in the housing market and consumer spending. There were few options of course. No one else would have looked at Do It All and the cost of closing it would have been prohibitive. Boots chairman Lord Blyth will be praying for the feelgood factor.

Exchange job is no poisoned chalice

So it is Gavin Casey, formerly chief operating officer of Smith New Court and a name totally absent from the list of possibility touted in the press, who takes in the poisoned chalice of the Stock Exchange's top job. But hold on a moment. Is this really such a tough or important assignment as it once was? A lot has changed since Michael Lawrence was so unceremoniously thrown overboard six months ago. Then it seemed an impossible job, one that required recon-

ciling very different vested interests, riding roughshod over powerful traditionalists, and creating alternative sources of revenue, sometimes in competition with members, to shore up the exchange's future. That was how Mr Lawrence characterised the role, anyway.

Mr Casey will find it hard to recognise these things in the Exchange he is about to inherit. With Mr Lawrence removed, an air of calm and quiet endeavour returned to the Exchange. The upshot is that most of the important decisions, especially that of the new trading system, have already been taken. The Stock Exchange is going to have to take on the chin the loss of revenue that the start-up of Crest involves and drastically adjust its costs and horizons accordingly. As for the new trading system, it is to be a hybrid - the order driven system favoured by Mr Lawrence but with the quote driven system beloved of market-makers continuing in tandem.

Mr Casey's job is to argue over the down-sizing, to carry out decisions which have already been taken for him by others. Obviously it is not a particularly exciting role but it is one better suited to the more limited position in the City the Exchange must resign itself to. And just in case Mr Casey is tempted to follow his predecessor's pretensions, and attempt to go native, let it not be forgotten that he is essentially a creature of Michael Marks, the Smith New Court chairman (now Merrill Lynch) most closely associated with the ousting of Mr Lawrence.

NatWest to buy top US broker for £385m

NIC CICUTI

National Westminster Bank yesterday announced it is to pay £385m for Greenwich Capital Holdings, a top US securities dealer and broker, as part of its bid to become one of the leading global investment banks.

The purchase of Greenwich from the Long Term Credit Bank of Japan follows NatWest's recent purchases of Gleacher, a mergers and acquisitions adviser, and Garfmore, the UK fund manager.

Martin Owen, chief executive of NatWest Markets, the bank's corporate and investment banking arm, said: "This acquisition completes the major strategic moves needed to build a strong competitive position in the US."

"We now have critical mass in the US government bond markets, providing strong institutional distribution and trading expertise. We will also have leading skills in asset-backed securities. This will be a strong platform on which to develop our position in the global bond markets," Mr Owen added.

NatWest Markets has 6,500 staff in 24 countries and provides

risk management, foreign exchange, securities sales, trading and research to institutions.

Greenwich, which is in the top 10 among fixed income firms in the US, was bought by LTCB of Japan in 1988 for US\$140m (£85m) becoming the Japanese bank's primary US operations unit.

Its capital markets arm has an average daily dealing volume of more than \$20bn and is a leading underwriter and dealer in US Treasury, mortgage and asset-backed securities. The company is also a broker in exchange-traded options.

In 1995, Greenwich, which employs 400, recorded pre-tax profits of US\$75m, down slightly on its previous year's total of US\$76.4m, achieved during the 1994 bear market in bonds.

Mr Owen said: "The Greenwich management team have proven expertise and a disciplined approach which has built a consistently profitable fixed-income business. This will be a very strong position to build our position in the global bond markets."

He added that NatWest's interest in Greenwich followed

the bank's decision to acquire a strong presence in US government bond trading and related derivatives. Organic growth was considered but not chosen because it would not have led to a market-leading position in the time desired.

Greenwich had been identified some months ago as being potentially for sale by LTCB, which has suffered bad loans problems in Japan.

Discussions between NatWest and Greenwich began in earnest several weeks ago after

the US firm was given the go-ahead by its Japanese parent.

Greenwich's joint chief executives and co-presidents, Gary Holloway and Konrad Kruger, will jointly head NatWest Market's global fixed-income arm.

'Youth radio' bid tipped to win Yorkshire licence

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

The Radio Authority is poised to announce the winner of the regional radio licence for Yorkshire, in one of the most competitive franchise rounds yet seen in the fast-growing commercial market.

A full-day meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, with the winning bid expected to be unveiled by the Authority's 12-member board by early evening.

A field of 13 applicants has entered the race, with the big radio groups Capital, GWR and Chrysalis all represented. The applications fall into several camps according to proposed format, with dance and other youth-oriented programming a clear favourite.

Of the main commercial radio groups, both GWR's consortium, K-Max, and Chrysalis's Galaxy 105, promise dance music, which the companies believe

is a clear winner in a market already well served by adult contemporary and hits channels. Kiss FM, a private company which has leased the Kiss name from Emap, the media giant, is also proposing a dance station.

One insider said: "If the Radio Authority wants to broaden choice and safeguard diversity, I think they will see that the missing strand is youth programming."

All the same, at least one of the bidders, Saga, is targeting the over-50 age group, with a mix of talk and music. There is even a bid to present multi-cultural music, from Arrow Broadcasting.

The Authority is required by statute to choose a winner on three broad criteria: broadening choice; ensuring fair and effective competition; and financial viability.

According to some bidders, a key issue will be the amount of money applicants intend to spend to promote the service. Capital's

YFM bid includes a promise to spend at least £500,000, while Chrysalis, which operates the Heart stations in Birmingham and London and the Galaxy service in Bristol, could put as much as £1m behind its Yorkshire launch if it wins the bid.

Financial viability, a prime concern of the Authority, could tip the balance. K-Max, 40 per cent owned by GWR, has estimated capital expenditure of £255,000, next to £697,000 for Capital. The K-Max figure is viewed by competitors as being too low to finance the service properly.

Other imponderables include the Authority's view of competition in the marketplace. MSM, the national sales house owned by Capital, currently handles as much as 60 per cent of commercial radio advertising in the UK, following the decision by Emap to transfer extensive business, including its Metro radio from its competitor, IRS.

Telewest ready to swing axe

UK cable operators, including the market leader, Telewest, have launched a wide-ranging review of their pay-TV programming, aimed at removing under-performing channels to make room for new services in the autumn, writes Matthew Horsman.

According to industry sources, negotiations are also underway to reduce the amount paid by cable companies to programmers who have not hit performance targets. Among the channels being asked to reduce their charges are CNN, the

UK news network, and some of the channels in the Flextest stable, including Family.

The inventory clean-up will give cable operators greater capacity to carry new services, including a 24-hour weather channel, the Sega games channel, and a collection of new services from Granada Sky Broadcasting, the joint venture owned by Granada, the media and leisure giant, and BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster.

Granada plans to launch five new programming strands on satellite from October. They in-

Power bills cut by lower subsidy

PATRICK TOOHER

Average household electricity bills are set to fall by up to £20 a year after the industry regulator announced cuts in the subsidy paid by consumers to support the nuclear industry, which is being privatised next month.

Two regional electricity companies, Eastern and Midlands, immediately announced price cuts of up to 3.9 per cent for customers. Midlands said the typical annual bill will be £266, while Eastern's 3 million customers will receive a one-off rebate of up to £11 this year.

Professor Stephen Littlechild, director-general of Ofgem, said he intended to cut the subsidy - known as the fossil fuel levy - from 10 per cent of the average bill to 3.7 per cent. The first phase of the cut will apply from 1 November to 31 March.

Professor Littlechild promised a further review in the autumn of 1996 to assess the levy required from 1 April 1997.

"However I anticipate that it should be possible to maintain or reduce the rate from 1 April," he added.

The move had been expected as part of the process of the sale of British Energy, operator of the eight most modern nuclear reactors. The levy was brought in at the privatisation in 1989 to subsidise the nuclear industry's heavy maintenance and decommissioning costs.

Professor Littlechild said the new rate would cover payments due to the non-privatised part of the industry, including the ageing Magnox reactors, as well as subsidies for renewable sources such as wind-power.

The Industry and Energy Minister, Tim Eggar, applauded the announcement as "yet further good news for electricity consumers".

He said: "Electricity bills are already at the lowest level in real terms since 1974 and consumers also received a discount of just over £50 in the first quarter of this year, following the National Grid flotation."

Boots' chairman, Lord Blyth, said he was confident that the present strategy of improving the 134 stores would work as consumer demand picked up. Like-for-like sales in the core stores have improved by 6.6 per cent in the first 15 weeks of the current year. He added that with further improvement the chain could break even next year.

"We recognise the risks of this deal but we have no doubt that pursuit of the existing strategy is appropriate for the business at this time."

Analysts welcomed Smith's decision to abandon its involvement but questioned Boots' forecast on profits. "There's no way it will break even next year," one said. "They need to increase sales by more than 6 per cent and no capacity is being withdrawn from the market. They will have to take share from others."

Boots shares rose 12.5p to 607.5p. WH Smith edged 3p higher at 484p.

Change to Interest Rates.

With effect from close of business on 11th June 1996 the following Business Cheque and Deposit rates are applicable to the accounts set out below:

*Rate per Annum**
GROSS % GROSS C.A.R.%

Business Interest Cheque Account

Instant Access Cheque Account

£250,000+	2.75	2.78
£100,000-249,999	2.60	2.63
£50,000-99,999	2.10	2.12
£10,000-49,999	1.75	1.76
£2,000-9,999	1.50	1.51
£1-1,999	1.00	1.00

Schools Banking Account

4.00 4.06

Capital Reserve Account**

£250,000+	4.50	4.58
£100,000-249,999	4.30	4.37
£50,000-99,999	3.85	3.91
£10,000-49,999	3.55	3.60
£1-9,999	3.25	3.29

Practice Call Account†

£100,000+	4.25	4.32
£50,000-99,999	4.00	4.06
£10,000-49,999	3.75	3.80
£2,000-9,999	2.25	2.27
£1-1,999	1.00	1.00

TSB We want you to say YES</p

market report/shares

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FT-SE 100
3755.7+26.9
FT-SE 250
4462.3 +9.7
FT-SE 350
1898.8+11.5
SEAO VOLUME
563.5m shares,
30,049 bargains
Gifts Index
92.44 +0.03
SHARE SPOTLIGHT
share price, pence
120
115
110
105
100
95
90
Singer & Friede
JASON J F M A M J

Rally continues as some prepare for a surge to 4,000

TAKING STOCK

The stock market has almost recovered from the disquieting lurch provoked by the stronger than expected US employment figures.

The FT-SE 100 index rose a further 26.9 points, making a two-day gain of 48.9. But the rally has been achieved in patently thin trading with most investors content to sit on the sidelines awaiting developments.

New York influences have helped; so has evidence that last week's base rate cut was justified on economic grounds and was not merely a blatant political manoeuvre.

Some observers, no doubt with their fingers tightly crossed, believe there are signs shares could be preparing for the surge many anticipate will point Footsie to around the 4,000-point mark.

British Steel was the best performing blue chip. Ahead of year's figures on Monday the

shares rose 6.5p to 176.5p. Profits could show a dramatic advance, nearly doubling to more than £1bn. Current year's forecasts, however, are less impressive and a sharp decline is expected next year.

Refiners drew support from further indications of a growing fuel oil factor in the high street, with Dixons up 15p to 526p and Kingfisher 11p at 620p.

British Airways responded to its long mooted alliance with American Airlines with a 9p gain to 562p, although there was some disappointment the link was not underlined by a share exchange.

The future composition of Footsie generated excitement with the Footsie steering committee due to decide on any changes today. Orange, the mobile telephone group, and United News & Media, following its deal with MAI, are favourites to join the blue chip

club. Foreign & Colonial, the investment group, is a nearer casualty and Greenalls, the pub chain is also likely to be dropped. Courtaulds, 9.5p higher at 429p, and Lasmo, up 2.5p to 179.5p, are others on the border line.

Much of the market action was enjoyed in the lower divisions, with Singer & Friedlander, the merchant bank with more than £4bn under management and controlling stockbroker Collins Stewart, adding 4p to 112p as Panmore Gordon put a buy sign on the shares.

Emap, the media group, enjoyed a NatWest Securities push, gaining 15p to 693p and

Abbey National rose 8.5p to 550.5p as SBC Warburg repeated buy advice.

Tarmac unscathed builders and related shares with a surprise profit warning. Chairman Sir John Banham said first half figures would be "well down" but hoped for an improvement as the year progressed. The shares fell 4p to 112p.

Sure Free Inns ended 17p higher at 287p as Regent Inns declared its shareholding at 6.63 per cent. Regent was little changed at 249p but Tom Cobleigh, another pub chain where there is the smell of bad action, gained 16p to 265p. Cafe Inns put on 17p at 185p.

Doelex, the chemical group, gained 18p to 288p. It is buying BTI's polymer unit for £5.9m and raising £6.2m through a one-for-five 230p rights issue.

Celsis International, the healthcare group, edged forward 3.5p to 180.5p as Merrill Lynch said the shares should be closer to 200p. The securities house expects a further loss - £3.3m - in the current year but profit of £3.2m in the following year.

Viewline produced maiden figures, a seven-month loss of £167,000. The shares, floated at 100p at the start of the year, fell 10p to 61.5p.

Biston & Battersea Enamels, a trinket maker, climbed 50p to 80p. The shares have advanced from 33p in the past year. After two years of losses the company returned to the black and profits were up 43 per cent to £310,000 in its last year. There is talk the group is

continuing to trade well and could attract a predator.

Revelation, the luggage group was traded at 5.5p in its new slantline form and Prism Rail, shunted on to the market at 100p last month, continued its remarkable headway, hitting 280p with a 55p gain.

TradePoint, running the rival order-driven share market which has failed to make the progress expected, slumped 1.5p to 135p. Selling in Vancouver, where TradePoint was first quoted, was behind the fall. One Canadian stockbroker is thought to be cutting a 300,000 share stake and some private investors are thought to be worried by the company's intention to give up its Vancouver quote.

The special dividend shares of News International surged 83p to 291p as the parent News Corporation moved to mop up the minority, offering 1.53 News Corp preferred shares for each special dividend share.

Caird, the waste disposal group valued at around £1m, jumped 47p to 390p following director buying after last week's upbeat trading statement. The shares have gained 140p in a week.

PPPL Therapeutics, producing human proteins from sheep milk, made the expected healthy debut, hitting 500p before settling at 487p from its 450p placing.

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Index	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	PrevClose	Index	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	PrevClose	Index	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	PrevClose
Index-linked	Airtex	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
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Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
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Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00	Medium	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200	101.00
Index-linked	Alcan	174.50	-2.50	200	177.00	Shorts	100.00	1.00	-1.00	200							

business

Northern weaned off milk round

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Like its dairy industry counterpart Unigate, Northern Foods has endured a painful restructuring over the last two years as it has come to terms with the decline in doorstep milk deliveries. It has reduced its bottling capacity by 40 per cent and cut 5,000 jobs, leaving recent profits figures scarred by resulting charges.

The shares have responded accordingly, falling from 1993's 280p to a low of 16p at the end of last year. Then, just as the company looked like it was out of the woods, along came the BSE scare in March, knocking the shares back down again. Added to these woes has been the continued price pressure from the supermarkets in which Northern Foods supplies a wide range of ready-made meals and liquid milk. Northern's cream was left tasting extremely sour.

But, as with Unigate, which reported figures on Monday, the situation for Northern Foods is gradually improving. Profits for the year to March bounced back from £16m to £19.8m, though the 1995 figures were depressed by £91m of restructuring costs. Stripping out the exceptional, profits from continuing businesses improved by 4 per cent to £124m. The market was encouraged by the chairman Chris Haskins' bullish comments on consumer spending, which gave optimism that this year will be better than expected.

In prepared foods, profit improved by 6.6 per cent to £87.4m, though the BSE scare will knock £4m-£5m off the total in the current year. The best performers were Eden Vale and the cakes, desserts and puddings business. The hot summer dented sales of Fox's biscuits.

In milk, doorstep volumes fell by 12 per cent, which was in line with expectations and better than Unigate's 16 per cent. Supermarket deliveries improved by 11 per cent, though this is a low-margin business.

Northern is hoping that the supermarkets will start easing prices, taking the pressure off the suppliers. But given the grocery retailers' willingness to use volume lines such as bread and milk as loss-leaders, this could be wishful thinking.

Northern is also unhappy about Milk Marque's monopoly position in the milk supply industry. Following the drop in the market price, it seems to be assuming that there will be a cut at the price review next month. If this reduction fails to materialise, Northern's margins will remain under pressure.

The other main concern is Northern's strategy to increase its exposure to the big supermarkets groups, which now account for 60 per cent of group sales in prepared foods. This when most

other food companies are trying to reduce their exposure. BZW is forecasting profits of £130m this year. With the shares up 3p to 194p, they trade on a forward rating of 12. Hold.

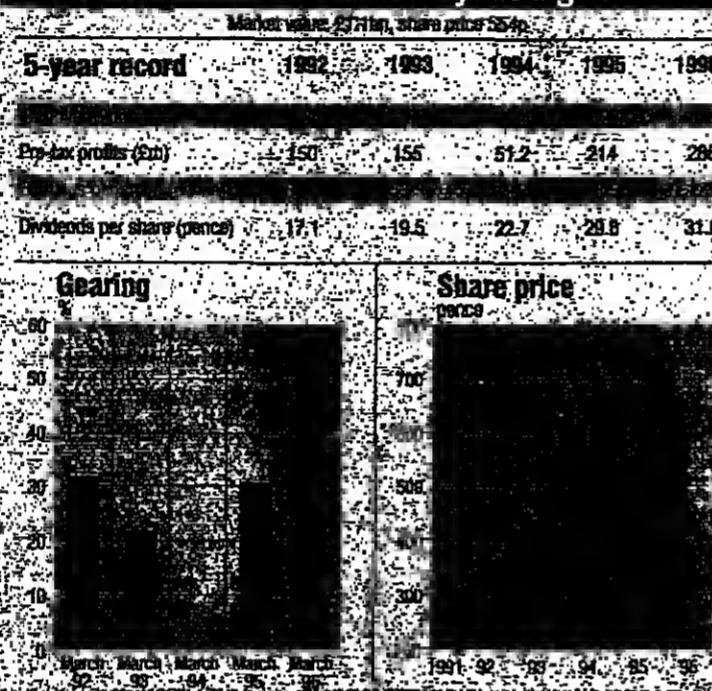
East Midlands shows largesse

It is no coincidence that the arrival of Nigel Rudd as chairman of East Midlands Electricity in 1994 saw a sharp turnaround in the regional electricity company's gearing. The Williams Holdings chairman and his management team have presided over a massive £720m turn-around in value to shareholders, encompassing special dividends and the distribution of the group's holding in the National Grid, over and above normal dividend payments.

Although this largesse has pushed up gearing to 60 per cent, the group's phenomenal cash flow means it is lower than expected and well below the management's target level of 80 per cent. But the shares slid 12p to 554p.

The group has cut prices by 2.7 per cent this year and will have to find another £30m of savings to offset the regulatory review. But with restructuring provisions of £35m in hand, it is confident there is still plenty to go on that front. Even so, profits are likely to dip in £190m (from £214m) this year, putting the shares on a forward multiple of seven. The group should be one of the best placed ahead of full deregulation in 1998. Hold.

East Midlands Electricity: at a glance



yesterday on disappointment at last year's total dividend increase of 9 per cent (to 31.5p) and comments which appeared to pour further cold water on his prospects.

Generous by most standards, East Midlands' policy of rewarding shareholders has gone hand in hand with a decision to abandon the original post-privatisation management's diversification policy and concentrate on the core electricity business. The underlying impact of this strategy has been clouded by provisions, exceptions and last year's review of electricity distribution by the industry regulator, Professor Stephen Littlechild. Stripping out the £7.3m contribution from the National Grid from last year's results, East Midlands' profits were flat at £214m. However, the figures were further complicated by the release of an £11.4m restructuring provision and a £20m gain on the disposal of the last of the peripheral operations. Even so, management can be well pleased that it held the fall in operating profits to £189m, down from £208m before, given that the price review cost £31m.

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Amersham sees hope of a cure

Amersham International, the medical instruments to pharmaceuticals group, seems to have resolved the problems which wiped 7 per cent off its shares when it reported its interim results in November. The most important is there are now clear signs of an end to the malaise in the pharmaceutical industry which has hit sales of Amersham's research and laboratory equipment to the drugs giants.

The change in "tone" in the industry, evident in the second half, is already boosting sales of Amersham's technology and services, its drug development services, used in testing and screening new pharmaceuticals, molecular biology, where Amersham leads the market, and genetic sequencing, increasingly used by drug groups to short-cut the search for new drugs, reported sales growth of between 10 and 17 per cent last year. The improvement helped return Amersham's main life sciences division to growth in the second half. But group profits up from £47.3m to £50.8m owed most of their growth to foreign exchange benefits, which added £4.5m to the bottom line.

Healthcare, the pharmaceutical and diagnostic division, has continued to grow on the back of Amersham's already strong position in nuclear medicine. The main Ceretec brain imaging agent saw sales dip 8 per cent to £2.3m under the onslaught of competition from Du Pont's Neurotide, but Metastron, for pain caused by bone cancer, now sells nearly as well and the hope for the future is Myoview, the heart imaging agent. Amersham will receive a boost to earnings from raising its stake in the Japanese Nihon Medi-Physics to 50 per cent from October and give it a third of the world market for nuclear medicine.

The omens are better than they have been for some time for Amersham, but even profits of £63m this year would put the shares, up 28p to £10.43, on a prospective p/e ratio of 17. Hold.

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

Dog with a bone shows up at Stock Exchange

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

Michael Marks is sorry to see his colleague Gavin Casey leave the portals of Smith New Court, now under the wing of Merrill Lynch, to take the top job at the Stock Exchange. But Mr Marks thinks Mr Casey will do a good job. "He did a tremendous job for us putting our settlement and IT in order. He's got a great sense of humour, he's like a dog with a bone, he worries at problems until he solves them."

Michael Lawrence, the last incumbent, claims he was ousted by a cabal of market-makers, including Smiths. But Mr Marks insists that Mr Casey is not "the market-makers' man".

"He's an accountant by profession, he came from NatWest, he wasn't involved in that side of the business," says Mr Marks.

"The debate has moved on. We're going to have an order-driven system for Footsie 100 companies [something Mr Lawrence was keen on]. It wasn't the change, but the process of change that annoyed people."

When not pulling the Ex-change into the modern age, Mr Casey will probably be found at his small cottage in Dorking with his wife and three children. He also enjoys sailing and shooting - "not very well," according to one observer.

The papers may be full of the evils of smoking, but it is still compulsory for all executives of US tobacco giant Philip Morris to ask for a seat in the smoking section whenever they fly anywhere on company business. Even if the executives involved are non-smokers, which a number of them are. The condition is written into their contracts.

Pass the ashtray.

The antics of Paul Gascoigne and his team-mates apart, Euro 96 does not seem to be fostering much Euro-togetherness among the competing teams, at least not in Yorkshire.

Indeed the county is considering something of a culinary disaster area by the Continentals staying there.

The Danes, the Spanish, the French and the Portuguese are all steadfastly refusing to eat any British beef.

Only the Bulgarians are tucking into the stuff. Scarborough's town council have paid £25,000 to put the Bulgarians up in a local hotel, and apparently liberation from Communism has given the players an insatiable appetite for meat of all kinds - the more beef the better.

The Portuguese, in contrast, have parked a huge refrigerated truck outside their hotel near Rotherham, in which they keep all the food they'll need during their per-

iodous stay in the UK. The truck also contains huge amounts of water. Apparently Yorkshire Water's disastrous performance during last year's drought was headline news in Portugal, and the poor chaps are fearful of going thirsty during their stay.

Vic Cocker, the chief executive of Severn Trent who last year told you to concrete over your lawns to conserve water, is chuffed following the company's sparkling results. Observers, noting that Vic's brother is none other than Joe Cocker, the famous singer, are even saying that Severn Trent is finally "up where it belongs".

Joe Cocker was a gasfitter before he became a rock singer in the Sixties - clearly utilities run in the family.



Keeping cool: Vic Cocker defends Severn's service

Severn Trent pipes in £1m a day profits

PATRICK TOOHER

Severn Trent, the Birmingham-based water company that last month told customers to concrete over their lawns to save water, ran into fresh controversy yesterday when it unveiled record profits of more than £1m a day.

The company, which last year imposed a hosepipe ban on Wesssex Water, are being investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. But news that Severn's pre-tax profits soared by 40 per cent to £373m in the year to March provoked an angry response from Clive

regardless of the outcome of its bid for South West Water.

"We will still have a strong balance sheet whatever happens," said Vic Cocker, chief executive. "But it will be easier to get to two times cover if we buy South West because we expect that deal to enhance earnings."

Severn's bid, and a rival offer for South West from Wessex Water, are being investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. But news that Severn's pre-tax profits soared by 40 per cent to £373m in the year to March provoked an angry response from Clive

Wilkinson, chairman of the industry regulator Ofwat's central customer services committee.

"When customers think of how many of them had periods without water because of poor service they are bound to wonder whether Severn Trent are making extra money by cutting corners in the delivery of their service," he said.

"It seems that the balance between customers' needs and shareholders' needs are not in the right perspective and that the shareholder is getting the better deal."

But Mr Cocker responded by

saying Severn was spending £1m a day on capital expenditure to improve services to customers. He also noted that despite rainfall in the region 70 per cent being below the long-term average, the hosepipe ban introduced in August had been lifted at the end of April: "I view that as a vindication of the action we have taken over the winter."

The rate of water leakage fell from 24 per cent to 21 per cent, while measures taken to increase water supply by 5 per cent include plans to use the River Trent as a source of drinking water for the first time.

Severn has been rumoured as a possible takeover target for electricity generator Powergen, but Mr Cocker denied the more generous dividend policy was defensive in nature.

2 FOR 1 ODEON CINEMA TICKET OFFER WITH THE INDEPENDENT

To celebrate 100 years of British cinema we have linked up with Odeon Cinemas to offer all readers two tickets for the price of one at participating Odeon Cinemas throughout the UK. Among the films showing are *Primal Fear*, *From Dusk Till Dawn*, *Mr Holland's Opus*, *Muppet Treasure Island*, *Spy Hard*, *The Birdcage*, *Copycat*, *Things To Do In Denver When You're Dead*, *Toy Story*, *Executive Decision* and more.

How to Qualify
The offer is valid until Thursday 13 June 1996. Simply collect three differently numbered tokens from the thirteen we will be printing. Token 12 is printed today. Token 13 will be printed in The Independent tomorrow. Attach them to our final voucher which is printed today. Then take the voucher to a participating Odeon Cinema to qualify for your free cinema ticket when you purchase another. To find out where your local Odeon Cinema is simply call Talking Pictures on 0800 600900.

New And Then (certificate PG) stars Melanie Griffiths, Demi Moore, Rosie O'Donnell

and Rita Wilson in a nostalgic and funny portrait of how one Summer set in motion the adult lives of four remarkable women. In 1970 they made friendship pact as the not-so-innocent world of childhood adventure was cracked by the reality of divorce and the spectre of a 25 year old murder mystery. Now they gather together to solve one final mystery: how the girls they were at 12 could have become the women they are now.

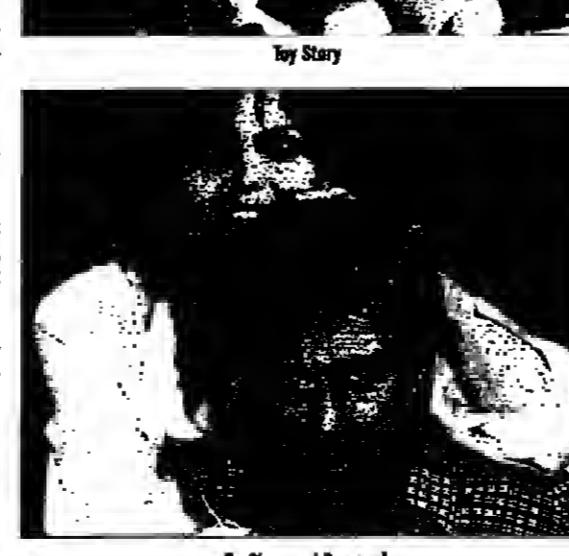
From Dusk Till Dawn (certificate 18), tells the story of the notorious Gecko Brothers (George Clooney & Quentin Tarantino), two of America's most dangerous criminals, on the run from the Texas police and the FBI after a crime spree through the South-West. Also starring are Harvey Keitel and Julian Lewis.

In *Muppet Treasure Island* (certificate U), the Muppets are back and ready to cast off and set sail on their zaniest adventure ever, as they encounter pirates, buried treasure and some angry warthogs, in Walt Disney Pictures' all-new, live-action, musical feature.

Spy Hard (certificate PG), stars Leslie Nielsen as Agent BD-40, a.k.a. Steele - Dick Steele in a comedy of high-voltage adventure, high-tech gadgetry and low-row humour.

In *Toy Story* (certificate PG), six-year old Andy's toys have a life of their own when left alone. Led by Andy's favourite toy Woody, the fearless pull-string cowboy doll, the toys live a quiet life of dedication to their master. All this is thrown into jeopardy on Andy's birthday, the most dreaded day in the life of a toy, when the fear of being replaced by another toy can become a reality.

Up Close And Personal (certificate 15) stars Michelle Pfeiffer as Tally Atwater, a articulate, sophisticated and charming newscaster. She is a familiar and comforting face to millions of network TV viewers. Going from small-town weathergirl to prime-time network anchor she was aided and abetted by Warren Justice (Robert Redford) a brilliant older newscaster, her mentor and lover. Their romance is intense and exhilarating yet each breaking story threatens to drive them apart.



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ON SUNDAY

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2. The voucher is only valid for admission to any film showing at Odeon Cinemas between 3 June - 13 June 1996.
3. The voucher is only valid when three different numbered tokens are attached from The Independent or The Sunday Times.
4. This offer may not be used in conjunction with any other offer or discount.
5. Odeon standard terms and conditions of purchase apply.
6. The voucher may not be used for telephone bookings and does not give the holder preference over other customers.
7. Odeon Cinemas reserve the right to refuse admission.
8. This offer does not apply to Odeon Leicester Square & Mezzanine, and the Odeon West End.
9. Photocopies of tokens are not acceptable.

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12
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CINEMAS

Burning issues: Health warnings fall on deaf teenage ears as a generation ignores role models and listens only to its peers

Love is the key to kicking smoking habit

GLENDY COOPER

Young love coupled with price increases is the most effective way of getting teenagers to quit smoking, new research has found.

Hitting them with health warnings has proved ineffective and most teenagers have "crazy" ideas of the risks they take, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund said yesterday.

In a MORI poll of 4,500

schoolchildren aged between 11 and 16 around two-thirds of teenage smokers think the health risks from smoking are not very important despite the fact that one in two teenagers who continue to smoke will die as a result of their habit.

Asked about health risks, teenage smokers saw air pollution as being as dangerous as smoking regularly. Three-quarters of non-smokers, however, saw smoking as a real risk.

The strongest influence on

A third of teenage smokers also agreed with a statement that smoking cannot be all that dangerous or the Government would ban sports sponsorship by tobacco companies.

"The truth is unless [teenagers] quit smoking about half

are going to kill themselves," said Professor Richard Peto, head of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund (ICRF) Cancer Studies Unit at Oxford.

Only 4 per cent said they

would stop if someone they admired in the public eye told them to.

Nor, in the past, did the

smoking-related deaths of

screen idols such as Gary Cooper, John Wayne, Steve McQueen, or, ironically, the man in the advertisement for Marlboro cigarettes, have a lasting effect on smokers' willpower.

Professor Gordon McVie,

director general of the Cancer Research Campaign, said that the findings contradicted widely held preconceptions. "A lot of adults believe that young smokers would listen to celebrities' advice on quitting ... [but]

love really is the key to getting

youngsters to quit," he said.

The other big influence for teenagers is price. More than half the teenagers surveyed said that a substantial increase in the price of cigarettes would discourage them from starting smoking.

And 55 per cent of

smokers thought increasing the price of cigarettes to £5 for 20

would deter young people.

The ICRF estimates that

smoking will kill around one

million of today's teenagers and children in middle age if present smoking trends continue. A further million will die through tobacco in old age.

The charities called for the Government to reconsider banning tobacco advertising yesterday while teenagers claim not to be influenced by advertising.

The survey revealed that children do buy and smoke the most heavily advertised brands.

Pamela Furness, the chief

executive of ASH, the anti-smoking lobby said, "If the recent rise in teenage smoking is to be reversed it is essential that the Government strengthens its policy on tax with a comprehensive tobacco strategy."

At current UK death rates of a thousand young adults who smoke regularly, one will be murdered, six will die on the roads and 500 will die through tobacco.



John Wayne, actor: Died from smoking-related cancer in 1979

Melina Mercouri, actress: Died of cancer in 1994

Humphrey Bogart, actor: Smoked until his death, of cancer, in 1957

Smouldering appeal of Hollywood chic

WILL BENNETT

For decades cigarettes promoted to young people the perfect image of chic and sophistication – an essential social accessory and an ingredient of many of the greatest scenes in cinema history.

In the Forties Humphrey Bogart and Bette Davis were rarely without a cigarette, in the Fifties James Dean proclaimed it as a symbol of adolescent rebellion and in more recent times Clint Eastwood presided over murder and mayhem in spaghetti westerns with a cheroot clamped firmly between his teeth.

Ultimately the entertainment industry paid a terrible price for this with the list of those who have died from lung or throat cancer reading like a roll of Hollywood greats. John Wayne, Vincent Price, Yul Brynner, Dean Martin, Gary Cooper, Betty Grable and Bogart were all victims.

Ironically Wayne McLaren, the macho rodeo-star-turned-actor who portrayed the Marlboro Man in advertisements for the cigarette brand, also died from lung cancer. He said on his deathbed in 1992 that he was "dying proof that tobacco kills you".

On this side of the Atlantic those who have died from lung cancer have included Pat

Phoenix, one of Coronation Street's greatest stars, Melina Mercouri, the Greek film actress, Serge Gainsbourg, the poet-singer, and Roy Castle, not a smoker himself but who inhaled other people's as he played the trumpet in jazz clubs.

In theory the anti-smoking lobby now occupies the high ground in the debate about tobacco. Indeed in some Hollywood restaurants the pendulum has now swung so far the other way that if you light up a cigarette the waiter hangs a gong to warn you to put it out.

But some sections of the population are proving more resistant to giving up smoking than others. According to the Imperial Cancer Research Campaign, "the amount of tobacco consumed by women, which decreased in the late 1970's, has started to go up again and female lung cancer is increasing" although some researchers say that they have found no difference between the sexes.

Children are also proving more difficult to persuade not to smoke than adults, probably because health problems caused by cigarettes seem to be eight years away, something suffered only by people who to them seem impossibly old.

Peer pressure and family background are factors as is a perception among children that smoking is a grown-up thing to

do. One recent survey among 11- to 15-year-olds showed that 29 per cent viewed it as grown up, 11 per cent thought it was attractive, 7 per cent described it as "cool" and 4 per cent as "tough".

Despite all the efforts of health campaigners, some films, television programmes and magazines still portray smoking as stylish. Sharon Stone breathed lingeringly through a cigarette in the film *Basic Instinct*, while Laura Dern did the same in *Wild at Heart*.

A survey for the Health Education Authority showed that in 10 recent films 14 leading characters, four of them women and including both heroes and villains, lit up on 21 occasions. Researchers were concerned that they showed that smoking is acceptable if you are feeling mean, stressed or in the mood for sex.

Other research has shown that 11- to 15-year-olds perceive a quarter of characters in British soap operas as smokers, even though some of them are not, and that compared to Australian soaps they were seen to be pro-smoking.

Magazines also put out mixed messages. Leanne Riley of the HEA said: "Showing pictures of glamorous models smoking next to an article which condemns it actually reinforces the message that smoking is a popular and cool habit."

For many pupils at Crofton School in Lewisham, south-east London, the harmful effects of the habit do not strike a chord.

Boredom, peer pressure and a belief that smoking is "no more dangerous than anything else nowadays" mean that, for some, only the death of a close relative would do the trick.

Six-a-day Louise Auguste, 15, smokes because her friends smoke. She thought about giving up once, but to no avail.

"My auntie was in hospital from a collapsed lung. Mum said I should stop smoking be-

cause I might turn out like that. I was scared and told her I was going to give up, but I didn't. It wasn't like dying so I didn't think it was that bad. If someone died in my family I would give up."

But for Michelle Walsh, 15, who switched to Benson and Hedges when she arrived at the mixed comprehensive because everyone else smoked, that brand, even a family death didn't make her give up.

"My dad's auntie died of

lung cancer. I was going to give up then but I changed my mind. When I came back to school and saw everyone smoking I thought: 'Oh well, never mind, try again another time.'

And if cigarettes went up to £5 a pack? "I'd be pouncing off everyone else. I certainly wouldn't be buying them myself," said Michelle, who smokes to stay slim. "You can smoke instead of eat," she enthused.

A smoker since the age of 11,

Deborah Holtham, 17, has smoked more in the last year than ever before. "Since it's been legal I've smoked more and my mum knows now so it's easier," she said.

Deborah knows the risks,

but reasons: "You could get run over crossing the road."

There are things that are far

worse for you, she says, like drugs. "Drugs kill straight away. With smoking it's a gradual thing so you can find out and stop. There's nothing

that would make me give up – unless I found out I'd got lung cancer. If they cost £5 a packet I'd just have to make them last."

To Sam Knight, 14, smoking one cigarette is "like taking a few mouthfuls of the pollution in London on a hot day".

Nathan Wilson, 12, is having none of it. As one of the school's official "peer educators", he preaches the dangers of smoking to his friends, all of whom smoke. And Melissa Sheppard, 12, also a peer educator, is adamant: "If I'm offered a cigarette by friends I say: 'No. I'm just a better person. I'm not that stupid.'"

The Independent crossword: sports section, page 12

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The Independent crossword: sports section, page 12

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THE INDEPENDENT

Summer of sport

Wednesday 12 June 1996

Glenn Moore sees Italy make an impressive start to Euro 96

Casiraghi the conqueror



Giving shot: Angelo Di Livio (No 15), the Italian midfielder, fires in a shot at the Russian goal during yesterday's Group C match at Anfield

Photograph: David Ashdown



For weeks the Italian press and public have been pondering the omen and suggesting that Euro 96 will see an echo of the 1982 1990 World Cups, and the emergence of an unexpected scoring hero.

Remember Paolo Rossi and Schillaci," they said. "Now for Enrico Chiesi - if Ar-Sacchi did not. He did. Fabrizio Ravanelli for opening game at Anfield today - but brought in Pier Casiraghi instead.

The 27-year-old Casiraghi is easily described as "powerful" and "robust," not adjectives commonly associated with Italian forwards. He has been on international scene for several years without ever causing excitement.

But yesterday, it took him four minutes to have his first goal, a rare sea of blue, on its with a well-taken goal. He

went on to delight them with a classically executed second.

His goals sent Russia to a possibly critical defeat and gave him the chance of emulating Rossi and Schillaci - who was a Juventus team-mate when he took Italy to the brink of success in Italia '90.

Casiraghi's chances of leading the Italian attack in the competition's later stages were enhanced even when he left the field. Ravanelli, given 10 minutes to show what he could do, missed two good chances to seal the Azzurri's win. Had Igor Dobrovolski not shot wildly over when put through in the last minute, Ravanelli's domestic popularity could have vanished overnight.

The Italians just deserved their victory. Russia had more possession, they often created the prettier passing moves in an attractive, free-flowing game. But they rarely penetrated in attack and badly missed Yuri Nikiforov in defence.

That weakness showed as

ITALY 2 RUSSIA 1

Goals: Casiraghi (5 min, 52 min); Tsybala (21 min).
Attendance at Anfield: 35,120

early as the third minute, as Casiraghi was left unmarked to receive Alessandro Del Piero's pass. However, the Lazio striker was slow to react and his shot was blocked. Chiesi's supporters nodded knowingly, and prepared to castigate Sacchi once more.

Two minutes later they were acclaiming Casiraghi's inclusion as he scored the fastest goal of the tournament to date. It came, as early goals often do, from a mistake. The culprit was Stanislav Cherchesov, the Russian goalkeeper, who mishit a clearance straight to

Angelo di Livio. He instantly transferred it to Casiraghi who, with the goalkeeper still scrambling hock into position, drove the ball past him from 25 yards.

The goal rewarded an Italian side which had been so hungry to start that Les Mottram, the Scottish referee, had to hold them back at the kick-off. Yet they now relaxed and, slowly, the Russians began to take control.

The much-anticipated contest between Paolo Maldini and Andrei Kanchelskis began to feature, with the Russians constantly seeking to release their winger. Maldini proved equal to the challenge but, on the other flank, Italy were suddenly opened up.

It came from a rare foray by Viktor Onopko. His penchant for stepping out of defence was restricted by Nikiforov's absence but this time he had a shot blocked. It fell to Valeri Karpin, whose shot rebounded to Ilya Tsybala, whose first-time pass was rifled in by Casiraghi.

As Russia pushed forward, the Italians had enough chances to win comfortably. Cherchesov made a good save from Zola but Ravanelli, twice freed by Zola, should have done better. He was saved by Dobrovolski's waywardness, and a timely punch from Peruzzi as Kanchelskis snatched an unlikely headed equaliser.

The onus will be on the former Manchester United winger on Sunday. If Russia are to remain in contention, he will need to reprise his Old Trafford best against Germany.

A new section
on a
new day

To do justice to a season brimming of major sporting events, the Independent is producing this Summer of Sport section every Wednesday. Among the regular features will be:

Being There
The wittiest writers reflect on the summer's big events

Today: Jim White witnesses the start of Euro 96, page 3

The Cricket Page
Quality coverage of the summer's quintessential sport

Today: Dickie Bird talks to Derek Pringle page 9

Playing The Game
A consumers' guide to an active summer

Today: So you want to join a golf club, page 8

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/enables troubled by 'treason' and Howey

land were losing it all ends yesterday as Terry Venables' career suffered a sinking attack on media's continued interest in team's drinking habits and defender Steve Howey disappeared from Euro 96 after getting into a bed of nettles. The England coach, who had already had his fill of Hong Kong dentists' chairs and airline vision screens, was yesterday forced by newspapers reports of three players - Sherrington, Redknapp and Campbell - imbibing in an English nightclub after the hugely disappointing 1-1 draw with Switzerland. His temper hardly helped as Howey's untimely twisted ankle, which caused some of England's critics of 'treason' and strong advantage Eng-

land have as tournament hosts. "It's awful but we're getting hardened to it. We just don't understand why it's necessary to do what you're doing - some of you feel like traitors to us," Venables said at the team's headquarters at Bisham.

"They're turning the public against the players which can turn them against us in the stadium. We would like them to help us win the games which can take us through, but it seems everything is very negative against the players."

The three players were dropped by fans disgusted to see them out enjoying themselves straight after England's opening game 1-0. The striker, the striker, Sherrington, had been substituted against Switzerland. Venables defended his deci-

Nick Duxbury reports on the England coach's loss of patience and a defender

sion to give the players two days off and to allow them a few beers. "I'm not going to say that you can have a beer if you win but you can't if you lose," he said. "That's makes me like a very silly little boy. We are trying to get them to stick their chests out and play like men so they have to be treated like men."

The trio were "aghast" when they saw the newspaper reports and told Venables that they had merely sat in a corner, had a couple of beers and gone home. "In Italy they drink wine with their meals every day, in Spain the same. What would we make of that?" Venables said.

Howey's time in the public eye lasted four days. "I'm starting to believe in voodoo dolls," said the 24-year-old Newcastle central defender, who squeezed into the England 22 as an understudy to Tony Adams after two months of injury problems.

Howey was trying to maintain his fitness with a solitary run through the woods on his club's training circuit in Durham on Sunday when his foot caught in a hole. He spent 15 minutes in a bed of nettles until a passing couple helped him home.

His torn ankle ligaments will take three to four weeks to heal, which leaves England dependent on Adams - only recently recovered from injury himself - and Gareth Southgate, with Sol Campbell possibly coming more into the frame. Tournament rules would allow a re-

2 sport

Why Watson owes rejuvenation to his caddie



Watson: 'can't wait'

Golf

TIM GLOVER
from Oakland Hills, Detroit

What Tom Watson and Gregg Norman have in common is that both left Augusta National in April with their reputations damaged and their egos not so much bruised as lacerated. Watson took five putts on the par-three 16th of Friday and missed the half-way cut at the Masters by a stroke; at the same hole in the final round Norman hooked it into the lake en route to a huge collapse against Nick Faldo who saw a six-stroke deficit turn into a five-stroke victory.

Yesterday Norman said it made no difference to him whether he was the "hunter or the hunted" on the golf course. Haunted might have been a better word. "I've scrutinised what happened with a fine toothcomb

and basically I played two bad shots. That's all. It's water under the dam. I hope I have a six-shot lead on Sunday."

Norman said he had not given in the US Open, which starts here tomorrow, much thought. Watson, though, said: "I can't wait." The 46-year-old from Kansas City has been thinking about nothing else since winning the Memorial Tournament at Muirfield Village, Columbus nine days ago. "God, it feels so good to win again," Watson said.

It ended a nine-year drought, a drought that left Watson parched for 141 tournaments. The winner of eight major championships, Watson had been the best in the business.

Acting on a suggestion from Jack Nicklaus, following the Ryder Cup at Walton Heath, Surrey in 1981, Watson changed his swing. From tee to green he remained the purest striker of

a golf ball but then something strange happened to him when he walked on to the putting surface. He could not putt.

More accurately, he could not putt from two, three or four feet. Watson had the yips, a mental condition that manifests itself when a player stands over a short putt. The eyes glaze, the mouth goes dry and the arms produce an involuntary jerk and the condition is made worse by the crowd, who let out a noise that signifies both shock and sympathy. Watson had lost his nerve. It had happened to Bernard Langer, another major winner, but whereas the German fought the affliction with a grotesque putting stroke, Watson continued to suffer.

On 34 occasions he was in contention, within five shots of the lead going into the final round, and every time he reached the green he behaved

as if he had an allergy to the hole. In 1994 he was on the threshold of winning the first three majors and in each of them he shot 74 in the final round. In the Open at Turnberry that year he had the lead on the ninth but retreated with consecutive double-bogeys.

"That was my most discouraging moment," he said. "The putting felt like an anvil."

At the Memorial perhaps it felt more like a hammer. In a practice round at the course that Nicklaus built, Watson was in a foul mood. After hooking a drive into rough at the 18th, he remarked to his caddie, Bruce Edwards: "I hate this game." Edwards rebuked him. "Don't ever say that. Remember all your success, what the game means to you. I told him to think about his dad. Something just clicked after that." The week before, Watson's father, Ray, had

been taken to hospital with a suspected stroke.

Going into the Memorial, Watson was fourth on the US Tour in hitting greens in regulation and 133rd in puts per round. Watson recorded rounds of 70, 68 and 66 at Muirfield Village and held a one-stroke lead over Ernie Els. Norman, incidentally, had missed the cut.

Would Watson hold on this time or would his suspect stroke destroy him on the greens? People held their heads in their hands when Watson took three putts at the first. He missed a two-footer and missed it so badly the ball did not even touch the hole. He did not have another putting lapse until he missed from five feet at the 15th. Els fell back but David Duval posted a 67 and when Watson came to the 18th he led by a stroke. He needed a four for a 71. He drilled a drive down

the middle, hit a six-iron to about 15 feet above the hole and rolled in the downhill putt for a hirdle three. On every green the crowd had given him a standing ovation. Now other players were the first to congratulate him. Duval said: "If I have to wait for my first victory because Tom Watson wins, then that's fine by me."

Bryan Nelson, Watson's mentor, said: "Tom has become such a good driver of the ball. I knew eventually it would raise his confidence back through his irons and down to his putter. It was a victory for the power of a positive mind."

After hurling his hat into the air, Watson embraced Jack Nicklaus, the host at Muirfield Village. "I believe it was the most thrilling win of any I've seen or accomplished in the last 10 years," the Golden Bear said. "It means an awful lot for the game of golf."

Farrell to make history tonight

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

It says much for the astonishing maturity of Andrew Farrell, a rugby player that nobody expects him to be remotely fazed by becoming his country's youngest captain at Gateshead tonight.

Little more than a week after his 21st birthday, the Wigan loose-forward will lead England against France, knowing he has already done harder things in his time. Farrell launched his professional career by captaining Wigan's reserve side at the age of 17.

"That didn't worry me either," he says. "I've always been the sort of player who has had a lot to say on the field, and the fact that I'm talking to older players doesn't bother me."

Farrell has been marked out as something special from the outset, but he has never played better than this season.

His performances against Bath and in the Middlesex Sevens have also had rugby union clubs drooling. Set that alongside his reputation in league and there is no rugby player whose current stock is higher.

Farrell himself points to trimming his playing weight as a key factor in his continuing improvement.

When Wigan played the Brisbane Broncos in the World Club Challenge two years ago, he tipped the scales at a mighty 18st 4lb - and Wigan talked of him getting even bigger.

"I'm 16st now - partly because of the change to summer rugby and the need to get around the pitch in warmer conditions - but I don't seem to have lost any power," he says.

Farrell will have the usual tangle of injury crises.

The most interesting newcomer is Warrington's Paul Sculthorpe, a back-row forward who, at 18, has the potential to be as good as Farrell by the time he reaches the same age.

The other new caps starting the game are the Sheffield Eagles hooker, John Lawless, the Salford stand-off, Steve Blakeley, and the St Helens full-back, Steve Prescott.

Danny Arnold, who scored four tries for the Academy side in France last week, is in the bench with a chance of a first appearance, along with Matt Callard of Bradford, who has overcome his previous disciplinary problems to rank as one of the form centres of the season.

France have lost Eric Vergniol, Gael Tallec and Régis Faustre-Courtine from the side that lost to Wales last Wednesday, with Laurent Lucchesi and Jacques Pech coming into the starting line-up and the New Zealand-born Darren Adams making his debut as a substitute.

Gateshead has a fine record of promoting the rugby league events it has hosted and the hope tonight is that some of the French football fans on Tyneside for Euro 96 will be attracted to the International Stadium to see how their countrymen fare.

The football tournament has affected England's arrangements by necessitating them being based 40 miles away in Middlesbrough. France's best players have looked so exhausted of late, however, that England should win with plenty to spare, thus setting up a decided against Wales at the Cardiff Arms Park in two weeks' time.

ENGLAND v France, European Championship, Gateshead, tonight: Prescott (Salford), Robinson, Connolly (both Wigan), Sculthorpe (St Helens), Offiah (Wigan), Blakeley (Sheffield), Lawless (Salford), Haynes (Leeds), Broadbent (Bradford), Sculthorpe (Warrington), Farrell (Wigan), co-captain Substitutes: McNamee (Bath), Molley (Preston), Rowley (Hull), Lomax (Bradford).

FRANCE: (Pic) St Gaudens, left wing, Luchez, Corneille, Gasco (Salford), Banquet, Bonsu, Dorevech, Estat (can), Bouzouza, Terrelles, Tokolo, Cabestany, Jarry, Pech, Substitutes: Yala, Adams, Blasius (Wigan), Van Bruun.

B&H CUP SEMI-FINALS: Yorkshireman gives Northants hope while Yorkshire make recovery in Roses match

Walton belies his inexperience

Cricket

DEREK PRINGLE
reports from Northampton
Northamptonshire 220-7
Warwickshire 91-3

There is not a lot of love lost between these two teams. In the past, tempers have run higher than anything seen during a Roses game, which was the other grudge match left unfinished as bad weather affected both Benson and Hedges semi-finals.

But if this semi-final appeared to be played out in a sombre mood under glowering skies, it disguised some brilliant cricket played in the most trying circumstances on a sub-standard pitch. When play was abandoned with 27 overs unbowled, Warwickshire, with seven wickets in hand, needed 130 runs to beat Northamptonshire.

That was one of two quick wickets that fell to Paul Smith and it left the home side at 88 for 6. All the more enterprising, then, their recovery to a final total of 220, which owed much to their

like the first Test at Edgbaston, this match was played on a pitch that was completely unsuited to the nature of the occasion - the semi-final of a cup. Here too, there were cracks, as well as clumps of grass to help the ball deviate, and with variable bounce also a factor, bold strokeplay was rarely rewarded with anything other than dismissal.

For Northamptonshire, both Kevin Curran and Russell Warren perished to big shots, Curran paying for a heave across the line at Reeve by having his middle stump uprooted, while Warren allowed wicketkeeper Keith Piper to bring off a brilliant running catch after top-edging a pull shot.

As it was, although the West Indian was only a way short of his lethal best, and Warwickshire - without Nick Knight, who ironically broke his finger at Edgbaston - got off to a brisk start, with Neil Smith striking several boundaries. However, it was Ambrose, this time at slip, who made the breakthrough as Smith edged a slash off Paul Taylor.

It was Taylor, too, who also removed the visitors' second pinch-hitter, Dougie Brown, for a duck. Andy Moles followed soon after, cutting Kevin Curran to cover, after one of the many breaks for bad light and rain, to leave the visitors on 61 for 3.

At that point the game was evenly poised but, with Paul Smith smashing his first two balls for four, the balance shifted Warwickshire's way. On a pitch as fickle as this that advantage may be only fleeting. Northants won 102.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
D 100-7 (2nd day); 220-7 (3rd day)
R R Morganman c Giles b P A Smith 40
R J Bailey b Welch 10
M J Curran c Ambrose 10
K M Curran b Rees 3
T W Morris c Piper b P A Smith 10
T C Williams c Giles b P A Smith 10
A L Pendleton c Brown b Pollock 11
J E Reeve c Giles b P A Smith 12
E Groom c Giles b P A Smith 27
Total (for 7) 220-7 (2nd day)
Scored 102-7 (3rd day); 220-7 (4th day); 220-7 (5th day); 220-7 (6th day); 220-7 (7th day); 220-7 (8th day); 220-7 (9th day); 220-7 (10th day); 220-7 (11th day); 220-7 (12th day); 220-7 (13th day); 220-7 (14th day); 220-7 (15th day); 220-7 (16th day); 220-7 (17th day); 220-7 (18th day); 220-7 (19th day); 220-7 (20th day); 220-7 (21st day); 220-7 (22nd day); 220-7 (23rd day); 220-7 (24th day); 220-7 (25th day); 220-7 (26th day); 220-7 (27th day); 220-7 (28th day); 220-7 (29th day); 220-7 (30th day); 220-7 (31st day); 220-7 (32nd day); 220-7 (33rd day); 220-7 (34th day); 220-7 (35th day); 220-7 (36th day); 220-7 (37th day); 220-7 (38th day); 220-7 (39th day); 220-7 (40th day); 220-7 (41st day); 220-7 (42nd day); 220-7 (43rd day); 220-7 (44th day); 220-7 (45th day); 220-7 (46th day); 220-7 (47th day); 220-7 (48th day); 220-7 (49th day); 220-7 (50th day); 220-7 (51st day); 220-7 (52nd day); 220-7 (53rd day); 220-7 (54th day); 220-7 (55th day); 220-7 (56th day); 220-7 (57th day); 220-7 (58th day); 220-7 (59th day); 220-7 (60th day); 220-7 (61st day); 220-7 (62nd day); 220-7 (63rd day); 220-7 (64th day); 220-7 (65th day); 220-7 (66th day); 220-7 (67th day); 220-7 (68th day); 220-7 (69th day); 220-7 (70th day); 220-7 (71st day); 220-7 (72nd day); 220-7 (73rd day); 220-7 (74th day); 220-7 (75th day); 220-7 (76th day); 220-7 (77th day); 220-7 (78th day); 220-7 (79th day); 220-7 (80th day); 220-7 (81st day); 220-7 (82nd day); 220-7 (83rd day); 220-7 (84th day); 220-7 (85th day); 220-7 (86th day); 220-7 (87th day); 220-7 (88th day); 220-7 (89th day); 220-7 (90th day); 220-7 (91st day); 220-7 (92nd day); 220-7 (93rd day); 220-7 (94th day); 220-7 (95th day); 220-7 (96th day); 220-7 (97th day); 220-7 (98th day); 220-7 (99th day); 220-7 (100th day); 220-7 (101st day); 220-7 (102nd day); 220-7 (103rd day); 220-7 (104th day); 220-7 (105th day); 220-7 (106th day); 220-7 (107th day); 220-7 (108th day); 220-7 (109th day); 220-7 (110th day); 220-7 (111th day); 220-7 (112th day); 220-7 (113th day); 220-7 (114th day); 220-7 (115th day); 220-7 (116th day); 220-7 (117th day); 220-7 (118th day); 220-7 (119th day); 220-7 (120th day); 220-7 (121st day); 220-7 (122nd day); 220-7 (123rd day); 220-7 (124th day); 220-7 (125th day); 220-7 (126th day); 220-7 (127th day); 220-7 (128th day); 220-7 (129th day); 220-7 (130th day); 220-7 (131st day); 220-7 (132nd day); 220-7 (133rd day); 220-7 (134th day); 220-7 (135th day); 220-7 (136th day); 220-7 (137th day); 220-7 (138th day); 220-7 (139th day); 220-7 (140th day); 220-7 (141st day); 220-7 (142nd day); 220-7 (143rd day); 220-7 (144th day); 220-7 (145th day); 220-7 (146th day); 220-7 (147th day); 220-7 (148th day); 220-7 (149th day); 220-7 (150th day); 220-7 (151st day); 220-7 (152nd day); 220-7 (153rd day); 220-7 (154th day); 220-7 (155th day); 220-7 (156th day); 220-7 (157th day); 220-7 (158th day); 220-7 (159th day); 220-7 (160th day); 220-7 (161st day); 220-7 (162nd day); 220-7 (163rd day); 220-7 (164th day); 220-7 (165th day); 220-7 (166th day); 220-7 (167th day); 220-7 (168th day); 220-7 (169th day); 220-7 (170th day); 220-7 (171st day); 220-7 (172nd day); 220-7 (173rd day); 220-7 (174th day); 220-7 (175th day); 220-7 (176th day); 220-7 (177th day); 220-7 (178th day); 220-7 (179th day); 220-7 (180th day); 220-7 (181st day); 220-7 (182nd day); 220-7 (183rd day); 220-7 (184th day); 220-7 (185th day); 220-7 (186th day); 220-7 (187th day); 220-7 (188th day); 220-7 (189th day); 220-7 (190th day); 220-7 (191st day); 220-7 (192nd day); 220-7 (193rd day); 220-7 (194th day); 220-7 (195th day); 220-7 (196th day); 220-7 (197th day); 220-7 (198th day); 220-7 (199th day); 220-7 (200th day); 220-7 (201st day); 220-7 (202nd day); 220-7 (203rd day); 220-7 (204th day); 220-7 (205th day); 220-7 (206th day); 220-7 (207th day); 220-7 (208th day); 220-7 (209th day); 220-7 (210th day); 220-7 (211th day); 220-7 (212th day); 220-7 (213th day); 220-7 (214th day); 220-7 (215th day); 220-7 (216th day); 220-7 (217th day); 220-7 (218th day); 220-7 (219th day); 220-7 (220th day); 220-7 (221st day); 220-7 (222nd day); 220-7 (223rd day); 220-7 (224th day); 220-7 (225th day); 220-7 (226th day); 220-7 (227th day); 220-7 (228th day); 220-7 (229th day); 220-7 (230th day); 220-7 (231st day); 220-7 (232nd day); 220-7 (233rd day); 220-7 (234th day); 220-7 (235th day); 220-7 (236th day); 220-7 (237th day); 220-7 (238th day); 220-7 (239th day); 220-7 (240th day); 220-7 (241st day); 220-7 (242nd day); 220-7 (243rd day); 220-7 (244th day); 220-7 (245th day); 220-7 (246th day); 220-7 (247th day); 220-7 (248th day); 220-7 (249th day

Dragons, dirges and the cheeseheads going bonkers

BEING THERE



In the first of a series celebrating the big events of the summer, Jim White travels to Wembley to witness the opening of Euro 96

Much has been said over the years about England football fans, about their intolerance, their callousness, their leaden insensitivity. But last Saturday afternoon, at about two o'clock at Wembley Stadium, no one could gainsay their judgement.

For the opening ceremony of Euro 96, a collection of former England players were summoned on to the pitch, in the manner of old champions called into the ring before a Don King promotion, their mere presence hoped to be enough to inspire the boys. There was Stanley Matthews, at 82 looking quicker round Wembley than many of the present team; there was Jimmy Greaves, a man smiling on despite the constant reminder that it is now nearly 30 years to the day since his greatest disappointment: being left out of the World Cup final; and there was Ray Wilkins, the snappiest dresser in football, showing that his time in Milan was spent mainly down the tailors.

Each of them received a warm and rousing welcome, as did every other player who trotted out. Except Emlyn Hughes, who, as he was hoisted to the rafters, performed a useful function for the first time in his life: he allowed the England crowd to prove one thing about themselves. That they know a prat when they see one.

On Saturday, they had plenty of practice spotting them. At Baker Street station earlier in the day, a dozen Swiss fans, in red shirts, faces painted and wearing baseball caps with large wedges of plastic cheese on the top, bounded on to a train from King's Cross already filled with beery lads from Portsmouth, Reading and Swindon bawling "no surrender to the IRA". For about 10 seconds, there was an odd stand-off as the Swiss climbed aboard, looking nervously at the occupants, until one of the lads started singing "The Birdie Song" by the Smurfs at them. Much guffawing back-slapping and hand-shaking ensued.

This presumably constitutes a good, old-fashioned, warm English



Enter the dragon: England doing what it's best at - bad pageantry. When Mick Hucknall (left) sang the official anthem, even the Swiss were cheered off (right)

Photographs: David Ashdown

welcome: citizens of the richest nation on earth mocked as a bunch of gnomes. Not that the Swiss minded, maybe they didn't notice anything else while wearing wedges of plastic cheese on their heads.

Scenes like this must have been repeated all over town: the police reported only 15 arrests as the 5,000 Swiss cheerfully accepted the role ascribed to them by the English. The

hosts assumed the visitors were there to make up the numbers, to lie down in the first game, to give the hosts an easy route to the quarter-finals. No need to be too hard on them, then.

Goodness, once hostilities began in earnest, our boys didn't even boo the Swiss national anthem. Best to save the energy for next week and Scotland, to let the stadium reverberate to "we all hate Jocks and Jocks and Jocks". It probably wasn't just the police, incidentally, who noticed how badly the segregation had gone awry inside Wembley, how many Swiss were dotted among the English, even among those hard-core nationalists down in front of the Roy-

al Box, who clench their fists in fervent salutes during "God Save The Queen".

But worries like that are for another day. Saturday was for showing the world what England does best: bad pageantry, turgid pomp, rock and pallsed football. Intriguingly, since England is the nation that also gave the world Pink Floyd, Sat-

they dedicate their lives to the art of holding up coloured cards in breath-stealingly complex patterns at the opening ceremonies of sporting events.

In England, for Euro 96, a few children from local schools were dispatched to their nearest sports shop, decked out in replica kits of the competing nations and told to jog round

and they were booted almost as ferociously as Emlyn Hughes. The boozing was particularly intense, venomous even, as the poor, unfortunate cruzzi Krauts trotted past the Swiss fans, who had turned one end of the stadium red. In this instance, the Germans are truly the only nation capable of uniting the rest of Europe.

The children dressed as the Germans are probably now in counselling: they were booed almost as ferociously as Emlyn Hughes

urday was an opening ceremony devoid of hi-tech, lasers or giant inflatables. Perhaps in deference to Europeans who would have been terrified at the prospect of vast British farmyard animals floating across the London sky, instead the performance was all low-tech, flag-waving and pantomime dragons.

In China, small children are sent virtually at birth to schools where

the Wembley pitch waving at the crowd.

Hardly inspiring, but this approach was not without its diversions. There was a nice irony in Croatia, for instance, a nation born of ferocious ethnic cleansing, being represented by an entirely Asian school. And the children dressed as Germans are probably now in counselling: they were booed almost as ferociously as Emlyn Hughes.

After the children, after the jousting, after the appearance in the centre circle of a trophy so huge its lid would have been too big even for Alex Ferguson's head, came Mick Hucknall, ploughing his way through his dirge of an official anthem called "We're in this together". Hucknall was backed up by a gospel choir, 100-strong and looking marvellous in black academic gowns. As a Man-

chester United fan, Hucknall should have known his own choice of outfit would be less effective than theirs: he merged hirsutely into the crowd in a suit of grey. Appropriate, though, for the forgettable sural wallpaper that is his song.

Even the Swiss, who as he began started clapping along with metro-precise precision, had given up by the end, lulled into sleep by the dullness of it all. They were woken up only by a noisy fly-past by Britain's foremost precision flying corps, which closely followed 16 parachutists tumbling from a flutter of helicopters flapping above the stadium. Simply Red, the Red Arrows, the Red Devils: the Swiss must have realised it was

tented themselves with other diversions, such as spotting John Barnes in the television commentary box high up in the stadium roof, easily identifiable by his custard-coloured trousers. How he of all analysts must have empathised, as 11 men in white shirts underperformed beneath his feet.

Afterwards, when it was over, as Gazzza, Dazza, Sheri and Platini staggered, exhausted, towards the tunnel, the Swiss players lined up in front of their fans as if they had won the trophy itself, linking hands and taking bows, like divas on a curtain call.

In the stands, the bankers in plastic cheese hats went bonkers. That's one great thing about international sport, it always throws up the unexpected: until Saturday, the last term you would use about the Swiss was party animals. Meanwhile, the England lads trooped home to Portsmouth, Reading and Swindon, filling the tubes with the gloom of under-achievement, only occasionally rousing themselves to sing their song of anticipation. "We all hate Jocks and Jocks."

Jordan the heart and soul of the Bulls run

Even Leonardo must have torn up the odd canvas in disgust, and presumably Jack Nicklaus at least once in his professional career shot a triple-boomer. So it may yet be that, come tomorrow morning, the Seattle SuperSonics are still alive in the National Basketball Association championship, having at last defeated the rampaging Chicago Bulls. But beyond the immediate vicinity of Puget Sound, hardly a soul in America believes it. A 4-0 Chicago sweep is as good as done, and a casebook study in psychological warfare on the basketball court – in any sport, for that matter – is all but over.

For at least as much as in the heart or even the limbs, this profoundly disappointing series has been won and lost in the mind. Yes, the Bulls may very well be the greatest team in NBA history. Certainly the statistics say so: an unprecedented 72-10 regular season followed, assuming they win tonight, by a 15-1 record in the play-offs and a fourth championship in six years. Yes, Michael Jordan is probably the all-time greatest NBA player (Chicago's city fathers have already so decreed by erecting a stat-

ue to him outside the United Center before the man is even retired, let alone dead). And who else could have reeled off 15 straight points towards the end of the second quarter on Sunday, lifting the Bulls to a 62-38 lead that killed the game?

But the Sonics, possessed of the second-best regular season record, should be nobody's pushover. This ought to have been a sensational series. However, even more than their athletic prowess, what truly sets the Bulls and Jordan apart is their will to win, and the conviction they will do so. This is arrogance, but divine arrogance, the knowledge they will not be – cannot be – denied. Even before the first two games in Chicago (won by the Bulls 107-90 and 92-88) the ferocious hunger for victory was visible. Like a prize fighter who stares down his opponent at the weigh-in, the Bulls showed inferiority in the Sonics before the opening bell.

Seattle's Shawn Kemp and Gary Payton are two of the finest young talents around. Thus far they've played like rabbits in front of a cobra. Not so Jordan, possessed of an extraordinary ability to lift his side's game

SPORT IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

The dominant figure in American sport is in lethal form, reports Rupert Cornwell

a gear whenever required. Last Friday the Bulls' Croatian guard, Toni Kukoc, was having a limp, dismal game two when Jordan came over to him. "Are you scared? If you're scared then go sit down." Kukoc exploded for eight points over less than two minutes in the third quarter, enough to swing a tight contest in which the Bulls were way below their best.

Now Chicago are in Seattle for games three and four (and five, should Leonardo spill his paint). In a basketball arena, enclosed and

thunderously noisy, home-court advantage normally means something. But Jordan had that small problem worked out in advance. "Basically, we wanted to take the crowd out of the game, and we did." He kicked the team into overdrive, opening an 18-point lead after 15 minutes, 24 points by the end of the half. From this kind of deficit in basketball, there is as little hope of return as for the football team down 3-0 after half an hour. The crowd might have been at a Beethoven concert. At the final buzzer, Seattle had been washed away, 108-86.

By then it was like a fight which the referee ought to stop, or a wretched afternoon at the corrida. A poor-quality hull (no pun intended) has nothing left. Stop the grisly, demeaning charade, the non-affectionate wishes with all his heart. So it was in Seattle on Sunday evening. You almost turned your eyes from the TV screens. By the fourth quarter, Chicago were missing free throws by the handful – but who cared? Jordan was on the bench with a towel around his shoulders, grinning and chatting, mission accomplished with

a personal 36 points scored. On court Scottie Pippen, the Bulls' second superstar, was controlling the game effortlessly.

It was left to Dennis Rodman, the third member of the Bulls' Trinity of superstars, to play Technicolor matador. His hair a peacock's tail of blue, green, yellow and orange, the monstrously egotistical Rodman leered, pranced and taunted (as well as making 10 rebounds). Finally, in the middle of the fourth quarter, he goaded Sonics forward Frank Brickowski to lash out and be ejected from the game. Not that it mattered. The Sonics by then had been picked, poked and speared into oblivion. Afterwards Rodman sneered that "Seattle is totally out of its rhythm. All they're doing is trying to mess with me, trying to get into my head. They don't understand, you can't mess with the master."

The sad thing is that in that innermost recess of the mind, where great athletes draw last and deepest, the Sonics have all along understood the point precisely. You don't mess with the Bulls. That's why this depressing NBA series was over before it began.

The history of hat-tricks goes back centuries and could describe any piece of magic involving any hat. In 1886, the *Daily Telegraph* wrote, with reference to an MP: "He may soon acquire the hat-trick and other ways of securing a place." Members of the House of Commons at the time would routinely place their hat on a seat to reserve it.

The hat-trick, in sporting terms, originated in the second half of the 19th century, with the taking of three wickets with successive balls in a game of cricket. The achiever of this feat thus became entitled to a new hat (or some equivalent) at the expense of his club. The term slowly became used to mark a threefold feat in other activities.

The first recorded use of the term was in an 1877 edition of *Cricketers' Companion*, where a player is described as taking six wickets in seven balls, "thus performing the hat-trick successfully". By 1882, it was a known term but still somewhat rare. A *Telegraph* article of 19 May that year reports: "He thus accomplished the feat known as the 'hat-trick', and was warmly applauded."

The sporting use of hat-trick may have some connection to the invention of the bowler by a London hatter, in 1851, although there is no record that the hat awarded was of any particular type.

Although it is not known why it was specifically a hat that was presented, there has been a tradition of headgear rewards for notable achievements since Roman times, when freed slaves were given a cap to mark their liberty. England footballers are still awarded caps for playing at international level.

The reason why three feats are deemed worthy of special merit is uncertain, though the roots may lie in the special nature of the Holy Trinity in Christianity.

Nick Harris



THE INDEPENDENT

PLAY FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM



PASS NOTES

Jos Verstappen
The Flying Dutchman was a sensation in Formula Three racing, and produced remarkably quick lap times in his first Formula One test drive, appropriately enough for Arrows, his current employers. This prompted Benetton to snap him up as team-mate to Michael Schumacher in 1994. A more experienced driver might have thought twice about the offer, as being number two to the German rarely advances a grand prix career. Verstappen had a horrible time, involved in a multiple crash in Brazil and a nasty pit fire in Germany. Chastened, he re-established his reputation with some fine performances for the fledgling Simtek team in 1995, until his luck ran out again along with the team's money. Cannily snapped up by Arrows for this year, he has proved good value, and Tom Walkinshaw's take-over of the team can only enhance his career prospects. With luck on his side, one day he will be a grand prix winner.



HOW YOU SCORE
Points are awarded per race to the top six finishers, based on the Formula One World Championship points scoring system (10, 6, 4, 3, 2, 1) but with an extra 10 points awarded to each of the top six finishers.

All drivers are eligible to score for a top six finish but can also notch up extra points as follows:

- The fastest driver in race-day warm-up will collect six points, with five for the second and so on down to one point for the sixth quickest.
- Drivers score one point for each place they make up over their grid position. Points are not deducted by losing places.
- Five points are lost if your driver posts first retirement, four for second down to one point lost for the fifth retirement.
- If your driver makes the quickest pitstop (from the entry of the pitlane to the exit) you gain five points.
- If your driver sets the fastest lap time in the race, you gain five points.
- If your driver receives a stop/go penalty, you lose five points.
- If your driver starts on pole position, you gain five points.

● The Independent will name a Driver of the Day after each race for a particularly impressive performance, worth five points.

● Non-qualification for a grand prix loses you two points. If a driver is on the FIA's published starting grid but fails to take the start, no points are lost.

● Drivers removed from the results for any reason lose all points gained that weekend. Any driver not competing in a grand prix weekend scores no points.

● Chassis score and lose points in the same way as drivers for a top six finish or any early retirement. The score is based on the first chassis home of that particular manufacturer. Likewise, only the first chassis retirement will count if they are both among the first five to retire.

● Engine rules are the same as the chassis rules, without the retirement penalties.



DREAM TEAM TOP PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize - a drive in a 650bhp F1 car.

You will be flown to the AGS team's training school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for a day driving F1 and other single seat cars.

CANADIAN GRAND PRIX PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points following the Canadian Grand Prix will win a day out testing with the Tyrrell Formula One team at Silverstone.

HOW TO ENTER

Choose your Dream Team from the shopping list on this page. Remember, you must choose three drivers (the third from the £1 million section), one chassis and one engine. You must not exceed your budget of £40 million.

Give your team a name and register it by ringing 0891 891 805.

You will immediately be asked the entry question: How many races are there in this year's Formula One World Championship?

To enter your Dream Team details you can use one of two methods.

Method 1 uses a tone phone that lets you key in the code numbers of your driver, chassis and engine choices. The computer will check that your team falls within budget and is eligible.

Method 2 uses a non-tone phone and you give your details verbally. A budget check is not possible using this method.

When you have registered your Dream Team, you will be asked to predict the number of points this year's champion will notch up over the year. In case of a tie at the end of the season, the nearest figure to the champion's points will win the top prize. In the event of a further tie, the team that registered first will win.

Once you have registered your team you will be asked for your name, address and telephone number.

Your team selections plus your personal details will be played back to you and, when you confirm that they are correct, you will be given a PIN number.

This is confirmation of your entry and will enable you to access the score checking line.

There is no limit on the number of teams an individual can enter, but only one team can be registered per call.

CHECKING YOUR SCORE
You can check your team's position at any time by calling 0891 891 806 and quoting your PIN number. If you want to know the individual driver, chassis and engine scores from the most recent race, call 0891 891 807. This line will also list the Top 50 Formula One Dream Teams.

Rules

1. All telephone calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute at all other times, with a typical call to secure your entry lasting between five and seven minutes.

2. The deadline to be included in a particular race is midday the Friday prior to that race.

3. The judge's decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into and there is no cash alternative for prizes.

4. Employees of Newspaper Publishing Plc, Haymarket Publishing Ltd and all associated companies and their families are ineligible.

5. Entrants must be 18 or over and residents of the UK or the Irish Republic.

6. To be eligible for the main prize, you must hold a current driving licence, be no more than 1.95m tall and weigh no more than 220lbs.

7. All scores will be worked out according to the official FIA time sheets produced at the meeting. The values stated for drivers, engines and chassis bear no relation to real life.

8. In the event of a tie for the Dream Team Top Prize or for any of the individual race prizes, the team that registered first will win.

9. For lost PIN numbers, call 0891 891 808. Helpline: 01275 344183.

10. The Top 50 Teams Line lists the top 50 teams from the last race. Both the Team Position Check Line and the Results & Top 50 Teams Line will be updated at 2 pm on the Monday following a race.

WIN a drive in a grand prix car

Plus prizes to be won with every grand prix

Make your selection from the Grand Prix

DRIVERS

£25m
1 M Schumacher
£23m
2 J Alesi
3 D Hill
£20m
4 G Berger
£18m
5 D Coulthard
6 E Irvine
7 J Villeneuve
£13m
8 M Häkkinen
9 H H Frentzen
£10m
10 M Brundle
11 R Barrichello

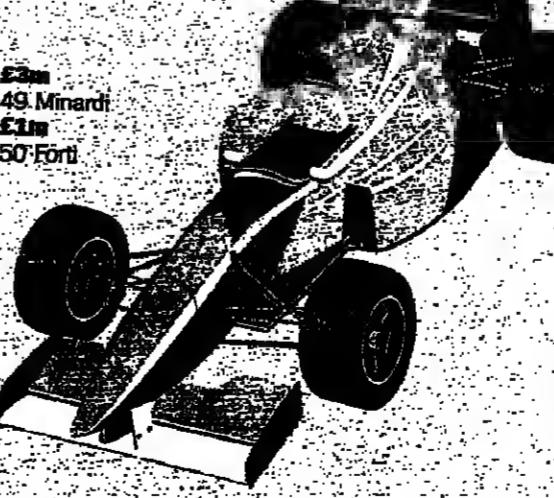
12 J Herbert
£8m
13 M Sato
14 P Lamby
£4m
15 P Diniz
16 U Katayama
17 J Verstappen
18 O Panis
19 L Badoer
20 R Rosset
21 A Montermini
£2m
22 G Fisichella
23 V Sospin
24 T Marques*

25 F Lagorce*
26 H Noda*
27 T Inoue*
£1m
28 M Blundell*
29 J-C Bouillon*
30 K Bräck*
31 K Burt*
32 E Collard*
33 N Fontana*
34 D Franchitti*
35 N Larini*
36 J Magnussen*
37 A Prost*
38 G Tarquini*
39 K Wendlinger*

*Not competing in the Canadian GP but may compete later

CHASSIS

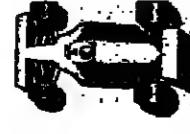
£200m
40 Benetton
41 Williams
£18m
42 Ferrari
£15m
43 McLaren
£14m
44 Sauber
45 Jordan
£10m
46 Ligier
£8m
47 Tyrrell
£6m
48 Arrows



Shopping List

ENGINE
£26m
51 Renault
£18m
52 Ferrari
£15m
53 Mercedes
£12m
54 Peugeot
£10m
55 Mugen

GRAND PRIX '96 RACE SCHEDULE
British GP July 14
Canadian GP June 26
French GP June 30
Belgian GP August 25
German GP July 28
Italian GP September 8
Hungarian GP August 11
Portuguese GP September 22



DREAM TEAM registration: 0891 891 805

TEAM POSITION CHECK LINE: 0891 891 806
RESULTS & TOP 50 TEAMS: 0891 891 807

150 من الامان

I can't help feeling that both British teams started Euro 96 at 100mph, while the Dutch and others have felt their way in

England's disappointing result against Switzerland will have been well received in one part of the country. At their base in Stratford, the Scotland squad and the coach, Craig Brown, will have been even more heartened by the host nation's weary second-half performance.

A flagging Paul Gascoigne unable to exert any influence after the break will be a tonic to the Scots. They have witnessed at first hand this season the havoc he can wreak on the field. England need Gascoigne, but anyone who has watched him perform brilliantly for Rangers this year might have spotted his weakness. His game is built on an all-action, nervous energy, which is impossible to sustain for more than 60 games a season with the rigours of a European Championship piled on top.

Terry Venables has to ask himself: can he afford to bank on the former Spurs playmaker being capable of controlling whole games between now and the end of the tournament?

The question on everyone else's lips on Saturday involved another Tottenham man. Why did Darren Anderton stay on the field against the Swiss when Steve McManaman, obviously having a far better game, was substituted? Anderton will play a big part in the medium and long term, but on Saturday he looked like a player coming back from injury. His timing was a fraction of a second out and his spatial awareness not yet back to its peak. These are crucial areas for this type of player; that is why he was robed of the ball on occasions when he would normally have no trouble.

Taking off the Liverpool player was a shock. Kevin Keegan, commenting on ITV, could only guess what Venables was resting McManaman. When you are playing wide, managing to isolate the full-back, and you know you have the beating of him, you are in heaven. You know, and the defender knows, that, as the game wears on, his tackles will get lazier and more rash. Success is just a matter of time. Unless he was injured or had indicated exhaustion to the manager, he will have come off bewildered and not a little miffed.

On Monday morning the Scotland team will have tucked into their porridge in a positive frame of mind. England had not been inspiring and it also looked like the best time in years to take on the Dutch. Their captain, Danny Blind, was suspended,



COMMENTARY
PAT NEVIN

Patrick Kluivert not fully fit, and both Frank de Boer and Marc Overmars injured and out of the squad. On top of this, most of the team came from Ajax, who looked jaded by their stan-

dards in their last games. Their long injury list bore testimony to this.

Craig Brown began to look more relaxed and the feeling in the camp was almost certainly: "Hey, wait a minute, we've got a wee chance here." Both Dennis Bergkamp and the coach, Guus Hiddink, confessed to being wary of the Scots' passion, and this was probably just the spur the lads needed.

Brown kept the ball rolling by picking a team with three recognised forwards in Gordon Durie, Scott Booth and Kevin Gallacher. This surprised everyone but it was not as adventurous as it sounds, with at any time two of the three dropping back to make a five-man midfield.

If ever a game went to plan, this was it. There will be a little glow around Craig Brown just now, as he

knows his tactics proved to be perfect. Scotland took the punches in the ropes, but ducked and dived and rode their luck enough to avoid a knock-out. They even managed a few decent jabs of their own, but at what price for the next bout?

The Scottish pressing game was exhausting, especially for the midfielders and forwards, thanklessly chasing lost causes. Gary McAllister played right-back, left-wing and everything in between. John Collins and Stuart McCall tackled relentlessly, while Durie will probably need oxygen for the next couple of days. There is some comfort in that England's best did not exactly look sprightly in their second

is concerning when there is scarcely a player in the starting XI they can do without. I can't help feeling that both British teams started the competition at 100mph, while the Dutch and others have felt their way in. Immediately after the Scotland game we watched France v Romania, it was slower and more measured, indeed it looked dull in comparison.

The only way Scotland can survive is at full throttle all the way. Granted, Continental sides are at the end of their seasons too, but none will have played as many fast and physical games as we have in the last nine months. This does not bode well for our chances in this tournament, or indeed any other. In the meantime, though, Scottish passion may continue to grind out results.

Vlaovic exploits Croatia's creativity

GUY HODGSON

reports from the City Ground
Turkey
Croatia



Croatia's Alen Boksic is paled by Turkey midfielder Vedat Inceefe at the City Ground last night

Photograph: Matthew Ashton/Empics

It was a big night for Croatia no matter what the result. It was their first match at a major international finals, and they would have relished it even if they had lost. How enjoyable it was for them, then, that they emerged with a victory to take them to the group of Group D.

The goal that announced their arrival at Euro 96 arrived five minutes from the end. Goran Vlaovic received the ball on the half-way line, swept past a defender and then rounded the goalkeeper before passing into the net. It was a brilliant goal in an otherwise mundane match. Not that they will worry about that in Zagreb.

It was an historic moment for Croatia but it was a significant match, too, for Turkey who were also playing in their first European Championship finals. Once the sick men of Europe, just to be in England was achievement in itself as their only previous encounter with the international big time was in 1954 World Cup in Switzerland.

The Turkish supporters have embraced the occasion like no others to date, trying their best to make Nottingham a second Istanbul, and the City Ground was ringing with their chants several hours before the start. "I'm not going over Trent Bridge," one taxi-driver said to a prospective passenger who reasoned it could not be more congested than for a cricket Test match. "It's far, far worse," he replied. "It's bad."

The man the Turks came to applaud was the coach, Fatihi Terim, who turned the team from cannon fodder into finalists. Ninety minutes before the kick-off he took to the pitch and received a welcome that the winning manager at Wembley on 30 June would be happy to accept. Only Brian Clough, you suspect, has had a better reception at the City Ground.

Croatia have built an awesome reputation for a fledgling nation that stems largely from

their defeat of Italy in Sicily in their qualifying group. Their preparation for Euro 96 was also impressive, with four wins and two draws en route to Nottingham.

The Croatians have the pedigree, albeit recently acquired, but it was not obviously apparent in a first half that was shared equally. The Turks had less of the possession yet their counter-attacks, frequently led by Ogün Temizkanoglu, still carried a threat.

After six minutes Serhen Yalcin was just over with a volley from Hakan's Sikur's

knock-down and four minutes later the Croats were grateful to Nikola Jerkana, as he intercepted Ogün's cross that was heading towards Hakan.

The Croats' build-up was slower and more precise, much of it flowing through Zvonimir Boban. The Milan midfielder is reported to have interested

Alex Ferguson, and the Manchester United manager would not have been put off by the cultured way he dictated the tempo.

The best chance before the interval came after 25 minutes, when Davor Suker strayed to the right wing and took his marker with him. The cross came over and Alex Boksic filled the gap heading over from the penalty spot when he should have at least hit the target.

The Croats began the second half at a greater pace, although they looked no nearer finding

a way through the Turkish defence than they had beforehand. Boban made several dangerous driving runs into the area, but the final pass failed to locate him and it was possibly indicative of a mounting frustration when he was booked after 54 minutes. Two minutes later, the Croat captain was substituted.

The Turks still looked lively and Hakan was just inches away from getting his head to Serhen's free kick after 63 minutes. Then Serhen himself was narrowly wide with a volley three minutes later.

No 3: Aston Villa leisure centre car park normally £3, on Monday £5. Have you come across any monster rip-offs? If so, fax details to Euro-spy on 0171 293 2894.

'Scalping' exposed at Villa Park

The news agency Associated Press can always be relied upon to provide a peculiarly American perspective on what we call "football" and they call "soccer" — its reports on matches played in the States can often read like descriptions of a totally different sport.

An AP writer at Scotland's draw with the Netherlands at Villa Park on Monday seemed impressed by the fans conduct. "After all-night partying, only 10 fans had been arrested for minor offenses [sic] such as public drunkenness and scalping," he wrote, conjuring images of marauding Scottish *Braveheart* impersonators removing orange-dyed hair by force. The truth, though, is less exotic: "scalping" means ticket touting Stateside...

Russian fans cry foul at visa chaos

Not all the Russian fans who travelled to England actually reached Anfield for their opening fixture against Italy yesterday. It seems that hundreds of Russians who bought tickets for their three Group C fixtures have been refused visas.

Vladimir Modelovits, who was on the cruise ship *Istra*, which sailed to Liverpool from Kaliningrad, has managed to bring with him just three of 35 fans who had paid to join his tour group. "Why in earth did England agree to host the Championship if all it wanted to do was turn away foreign fans? All we wanted to do was watch the soccer but they treated us like criminals," he said, waving a thick wad of tickets belonging to the fans still stranded in Russia.

FOOTBALL: THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

"Türk takımı acaba niçin sahada üçgen gibi diziliyor?"

... which is Turkish for: "Why don't Turkey use the Christmas tree formation?"

Brown sticks to long-term view

PHIL SHAW

After shrewdly lowering expectations before the finals, Craig Brown felt obliged yesterday to caution Scotland supporters against over-confidence prior to Saturday's renewal of their old acquaintance with England at Wembley.

Mondays encouraging stalemate with the Netherlands, who were second favourites to win the tournament, had the Scottish fans in Birmingham chanting: "Bring on the English." Brown, determined to

keep his players focused on the "big picture" of qualification from Group A, pleaded for a sense of proportion.

"The danger now is that people will think we can go to Wembley and win automatically," the Scotland manager said. "Everyone in the camp is aware that all we've done is draw our first match and give ourselves a start. It's kept the section wide open. We were considered underdogs, but we never felt we were."

In his next breath, however, Brown claimed that Scotland were still underdogs against England. "We're happy for it to

remain that way. But once the match starts the psychology won't come into it. It'll be the footballing advantage that counts. We think we can play better than we did against the Dutch. I've watched the tape and there were 20 minutes at the end of the first half when we showed what we're capable of. The overall performance was like a club side: Club Scotland."

The relaxed, jovial atmosphere of Scotland's press conference has been in marked contrast with the mutual antipathy at England's gatherings. John Collins, asked about

the moment he handled Clarence Seedorf's shot, struggled to keep a straight face as he replied: "My job at set-pieces is to protect the back post. That's exactly what I did."

Andy Goram interjected to suggest that Collins, a Catholic, might feel the need to go to confession. At which point Brown took the opportunity to praise his goalkeeper. "I'm bound to say that Andy would have saved the penalty anyway."

On a more serious note, he started the game of tactical cat and mouse with his English counterpart, Terry Venables, by

intimating that he had already decided whether to stick with Mondays 4-4-2 formation or revert in his customary 3-5-2. Since England, like the Dutch, use wide attackers, it could well be the former, although Brown stressed that this had no back four of his would ever be "flat".

The word is equally inapplicable in relation to Scotland's followers, into whose devotion Brown gained a fresh insight when a fan stopped him as he left the Villa Park pitch. "He said to me: 'I'm in disgrace — I've missed my son's wedding to come to the game'."

The Dutch coach again criti-

ised the Swedish referee, Leif Sundell, for denying his side an early penalty after John Collins blocked a shot with his hands. "The referee was unable to see it from where he stood. It was a big, big mistake," Hiddink said.

The Dutch coach stressed that Switzerland should not be underestimated. "Swiss football has developed tremendously. The national team, too, has caught up with the major European countries," he said.

The Dutch coach again criti-

sed the Swedish referee, Leif Sundell, for his dissatisfaction with the way England's David Elleray refereed the game against Germany, when 10 players were booked. "I think the yellow cards reflected the performance of the referee," Utrin said.

"At first he let things go and I was surprised by the roughness which was allowed to happen. Then he wanted to make up for it. I was disappointed with him."

RESULTS: Spain 1, Bulgaria 1, Romania 1, France 1.

REMAINING FIXTURES: Tuesday 17 June: Spain v France (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Bulgaria (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Romania (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Portugal (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Italy (1.30pm) at Wembley.

Wednesday 18 June: Spain v France (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Bulgaria (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Romania (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Portugal (1.30pm) at Wembley.

Thursday 19 June: Spain v France (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Bulgaria (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Romania (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Portugal (1.30pm) at Wembley.

Friday 20 June: Spain v France (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Bulgaria (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Romania (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Portugal (1.30pm) at Wembley.

Saturday 21 June: Spain v France (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Bulgaria (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Romania (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Portugal (1.30pm) at Wembley.

Sunday 22 June: Spain v France (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Bulgaria (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Romania (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Portugal (1.30pm) at Wembley.

Monday 23 June: Spain v France (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Bulgaria (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Romania (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Portugal (1.30pm) at Wembley.

Tuesday 24 June: Spain v France (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Bulgaria (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Romania (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Portugal (1.30pm) at Wembley.

Wednesday 25 June: Spain v France (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Bulgaria (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Romania (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Portugal (1.30pm) at Wembley.

Thursday 26 June: Spain v France (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Bulgaria (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Romania (1.30pm) at Wembley; Spain v Portugal (1.30pm) at Wembley.

PREVIOUS RESULTS: Denmark 2, Croatia 1, Portugal 1, Turkey 1, Romania 1, Scotland 1, Switzerland 1, England 1, Netherlands 1, France 1, Spain 1.

REMAINING FIXTURES: Fri 17 June: Portugal v Turkey (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sat 18 June: Croatia v Denmark (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sun 19 June: Scotland v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Mon 20 June: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Tues 21 June: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Wed 22 June: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Thurs 23 June: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Fri 24 June: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sat 25 June: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sun 26 June: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Mon 27 June: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Tues 28 June: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Wed 29 June: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Thurs 30 June: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Fri 1 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sat 2 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sun 3 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Mon 4 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Tues 5 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Wed 6 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Thurs 7 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Fri 8 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sat 9 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sun 10 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Mon 11 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Tues 12 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Wed 13 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Thurs 14 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Fri 15 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sat 16 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sun 17 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Mon 18 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Tues 19 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Wed 20 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Thurs 21 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Fri 22 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sat 23 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sun 24 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Mon 25 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Tues 26 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Wed 27 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Thurs 28 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Fri 29 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sat 30 July: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sun 31 July: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Mon 1 August: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Tues 2 August: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Wed 3 August: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Thurs 4 August: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Fri 5 August: Portugal v Scotland (1.30pm) at the City Ground; Sat 6 August: Portugal v France (1.30pm) at

6 coming soon...

Old guard put on their Olympic mettle

At the first Amateur Athletic Association Championships in 1880, the opening event, the mile, drew just one competitor.

Then 21, Walter George – the greatest middle-distance runner of his era – was said to have run 4min 20sec in training, nearly five seconds faster than the amateur record.

The rumours were enough to discourage all potential opponents, and thus when the frock-coated, silk-hatted starter fired his pistol, only George was there to respond.

One hundred and sixteen years on, the championships that start at Birmingham's Alexander Stadium on Friday form the pivotal point of the Olympic season for Britain's athletics. They double up as trials at which places for Atlanta go automatically

to the first two in each event. There is one other discretionary place in each event.

Roger Black, who will take part in a 400m that promises to be the most cut-throat of all the events this weekend, uses a footballing analogy to emphasise the importance of the championships. "There are a lot of athletics meetings in a season that don't really matter," he says. "But this is like England v Switzerland. It matters."

And just as England's footballers discovered, the real thing can be unpredictable, debilitating and disorientating. Last year's decision to grant automatic places to the first two in each trial event rather than solely the winner has added an element of drama to the weekend's action.

The AAA championships will have an added sting for athletes this weekend, says Mike Rowbottom

Someone, somewhere is going to be elated. Someone, somewhere is going to see the bottom drop out of their world.

The British Athletic Federation had more than one reason to alter its policy. The format is more attractive to spectators and makes absenteeism – which marred last year's trials so badly – too dangerous an option for most athletes to contemplate.

But the federation has wisely resisted any impulse to follow the American example of picking the first three past the post.

According to a poll conducted by Black

and the high jumper Geoff Parsons, most British athletes welcomed the new format. And an uneasiness at being obliged to run their specialist events when they turn up has been counter-balanced by relief that these championships will be closed. The prospect of British runners having to chase home accomplished Kenyan middle-distance runners in a desperate attempt to reach their finals has been banished.

Assuming he finishes in the first two places, Christie will collect his flowers, do a lap of honour and then trot over to the BBC cameras to announce ... surely, that he will go to Atlanta.

Our other Olympic champion, Sally Gunnell, is in no doubt about wanting to defend her 400m hurdles title, but after mixed experiences since coming back from long-term injury this season she is still uncertain about her capabilities. Unlike previous trials, where she has been happy to do the high hurdles, she needs hurdling practice in her main event.

Britain's 110m hurdles world record holder Colin Jackson is similarly up against it after four defeats in the space of 10 days. His hurdling rhythm is out, and he is suffering tendinitis in his right knee.

All in all, these championships, with their edge restored, feel very different to those of last year.

He is 30 years old, he has had four operations and a serious viral illness, but Roger Black is still ready to run the race of his life. Interview by Mike Rowbottom

When Roger Black finally retires from athletics, a career as a motivational speaker beckons. His competitive career, with its bewildering flux of glory and injury, has provided him with a rich seam to mine for the edification of fellow survivors in the sporting or business worlds.

What experience he has had of public speaking convinces him that his future could lie in that direction. "Ironically," he said, "my problems have given me a very good story to tell that seems to go down very well."

Watching Black take his place at the combined AAA Championships and Olympic trials this weekend, in what promises to be the greatest 400 metres event in the competition's history, will afford athletics aficionados enormous pleasure.

At 30, after four operations and a debilitating viral illness, Britain's pre-eminent one-lap runner of the last decade has re-established himself as the one the others have to watch.

And this in a year when British 400m running has an unprecedented strength in depth, with nearly a dozen men in contention for the three individual Olympic places, six of whom have run faster than 45 seconds.

"There has been nothing like it in any of the AAAs I have run," said Black, whose first two races this season, in Atlanta and Eugene, have yielded times of 44.81sec and 44.77. "I get a lot of satisfaction from my current situation," he added. "I'm proud that I'm 30 and running the best I've ever run. Despite all the setbacks I've had, I'm still doing it."

When Black started out in athletics as a callow, converted rugby player, he was known joshingly as "Bambi" – the runner whose legs went wobbly. At 6ft 2in, and with classic, blond English good looks, his effect on the female population soon prompted his training partner Kriss Akabusi to call him "Sex on Legs", a phrase which stuck. But the circumstances and trials of the last few years have turned Bambi into a far more serious, sure-footed character.

Black's international career began perfectly – individual and relay gold in the 1985 European junior championships, two more golds at the 1986 Commonwealth Games and European Championships and, just for extras, a British record of 44.59. At 20, he seemed big and strong and talented enough to ride any challenge.

But he wasn't. Soon he began to encounter the injuries which go with the territory of one-lap running, missing the 1987 World Championships and 1988 Olympics.

Medical opinion varied over how to rid him of the pain and frustration that was beginning to dominate his thinking; without money coming in, he had to put his house on the market; his car sponsors ever so politely requested their car back.

If it could happen to Black, the athlete who had it all going for him, it could happen to anyone. And the nice, middle-class doctor's son, who had abandoned the prospect of a medical career to concentrate on his special talent, began to wise up.

He returned to further glories – a second European title in 1991, world silver in 1991 and a triumphant gold in the relay. But injury and illness were never far away. He was not fully fit for the 1992 Olympics, had another operation and in 1993 he went down with Epstein-Barr virus, which debilitated him to such an extent that he was unable at times even to pick up a book and read.

That was the lowest point for Black. As he admits, there were times when he seriously thought he was finished as an athlete. But back he came again, to earn individual silver and relay gold in the 1994 European Championships and a place in the following year's World Championship final. His only concern now is to make the

Olympics and run well. "I have never had a good Olympics," he said. "I missed '88, and even though I ran 44.71 in 1992 I walked away not enjoying it. I said to myself: 'I really want to walk away from the Olympics happy, because that's what the Olympics should be about.' Since I came back in '94, everything has been geared towards that."

To that end, despite equalising his best of 44.59 last year, he took the risk of putting this season in jeopardy when he underwent an operation before Christmas to remove a torn cartilage from his knee. The Swiss surgeon Roland Bieden had been recommended by Sally Gunnell, who was still taking to work.

"It was a dodgy operation," he said. "I could not be sure it was going to work. When you can run in pain and still do pretty well, it is a hard thing to judge, and it was one of the big decisions in my life. But now I am running without pain for the first time in nine years, and that is a wonderful feeling. I can tell you."

Not all of his domestic rivals will arrive

in Birmingham this weekend in the same high position, but at least they will all be there – because they know they have to be, given the level of competition.

Black views Britain's current glut of 400m talent as "a cyclical thing". But he points to Britain's record in the European junior championships, where be. David Grindley,

He himself has played his part, setting high standards in the event for 10 years. "People in this country have always known that if they were going to make it in the 400, they would have to run fast. Now we have six people who could beat 45 seconds this weekend. But let's be realistic, if you can't do that, you are not world class.

old Jamie Baulch, who lowered his 400m best to 44.97 last Friday, Baulch and his fellow Welshman Iwan Thomas, who ran 44.66 at altitude in South Africa earlier this year, are the two runners Black is taking most notice of at the moment, despite Du'Aine Ladejo's prediction that he will win the final in a time around 44.80.

"Anyone can talk it," Black said. "You have got to perform it. And this season, Jamie and Iwan have performed. But there will be a lot of side bets on the 1-2-3, and I couldn't call it at all. Whatever happens, though, there will be surprises."

Whether this current domestic 400m strength can prove a foundation for even greater international success depends. Black believes, on whether one or more runners can make the breakthrough of running sub-44sec.

"I regard myself as a world-class runner. But I am no Linford Christie," he said. "For the event in this country to reach a new level, we need someone running a seriously fast time or winning a seriously big medal, such as the world or Olympic title."

"I hope it's me," he said. "But if not it has to be one of these other new guys."

Retirement is something Black has had to think seriously about more than once. But not, thankfully, at the moment. "One more major injury and then I'd stop," he said. "But if I'm running 44.5s and still enjoying the sport, I could go for another four years. A few years ago that really wasn't the case. There was a period when I thought 'sod this'. But I would love to win the European Championships for a third time..."

If ever Black needs encouragement to carry on what he describes as his "road full of obstacles", he needs only to think of his recent training sessions in Irvine, California, with his friend Jon Ridgeon, who has made his third comeback this year after Achilles tendon injuries which have required four operations.

"Every day, without fail, however hard the session, Jon would say: 'This is great.' He's just an inspiration. He makes you realise you have to make the most of this life. Because," he added with a chuckle – "the real world sucks, you know."

EIGHT INTO THREE WON'T GO: WHY THE 400 METRES WILL BE THE BEST RACE OF THE OLYMPIC TRIALS



ROGER BLACK

Age: 30. Personal best: 44.59 (1986, 1995). 1996 pb: 44.71.

First man to win European 400m title twice (1986 and 1990). Silver behind Du'Aine Ladejo in 94. World silver medallist and relay gold medalist in 1991. Has won 10 gold medals including relays. Career punctuated by injuries - 87, 88, 92 - and illness - Epstein-Barr virus ruined his '93. Knee cartilage operation last December. Now running as well as ever.

Brum rating: ****

DUAINE LADEJO

25. Pb: 44.94 (94). 1996 pb: 45.57.

Best Black to the 1994 European title, having broken through with European indoor title earlier that year. Retained indoor title this March. At high school and university in United States before returning to Britain in '92 and earning a bronze with the Olympic relay team. High profile – has hosted own feature show on ITV called Du'Aine's World. Brum rating: ***

MARK RICHARDSON

23. Pb: 44.81. 1996 pb: 45.72.

Fourth in the World Junior Championships at just 16, he fulfilled his potential last season after two years of illness and injury, winning the European Cup final and finishing fifth in the World Championship final. Degree in sports science from Loughborough University. Patchy form this season, now troubled with food poisoning picked up in Rome last week. Brum rating: ***

JAMIE BAULCH

23. Pb: 44.97. 1996 pb: 44.97.

Blond, dreadlocked Welshman. Won gold with British relay team at '92 World Junior Championships. Has made rapid progress since switching from sprints last season. Ran 45.14 last season, beating Roger Black at Gateshead, and reduced that to his current personal best at Nuremberg last Friday. Coached by Colin Jackson. Brum rating: ***

IWAN THOMAS

22. Pb: 44.66. 1996 pb: 44.66 (at altitude).

Ginger-haired Welshman. Coached in Southampton by Mike Smith, who orchestrated Roger Black and Kriss Akabusi's early careers. As a boy he was the 4th best BMX rider in Europe. Ran 47.37 in first year at 400 (1992). Had an impressive series of races in South Africa early this year. Beaten by Black in the Atlanta grand prix last month. Brum rating: ***

DAVID GRINDLEY

23. Pb: 44.43 (UK rec, 1992) 1996 pb: 45.66.

Surprised everyone in '92 by qualifying for the Olympics with Black and Derek Redmond. He then set the British record before finishing sixth in the final – and all at 19. Won Grand Prix final in 1993, but Achilles injuries were already starting, and he has had nearly two years out before this season's comeback. Former rugger by league players. Brum rating: ***

MARK HYTON

19. Pb: 45.83. 1996 pb: 46.39.

Became Britain's sixth consecutive European junior 400m champion last year, following in the line of Black, Grindley et al. Trains with Richardson at Windsor and Eton under direction of Martin Watkins. AAA indoor champion in '95 and '96, but suffered groin injury after test title. Relatively small, gave up football for athletics – played for Slough Town youth team. Brum rating: **

ADRIAN PATRICK

22. Pb: 45.63. 1996 pb: 46.29.

Made the World Championship relay squad last year under the direction of Ron Rodden, Linford Christie's coach. A sprinter who has moved up to good effect. Brum rating: **

OTHERS TO WATCH OUT FOR:

GUY BULLOCK, European junior champion... **DAVID NOLAN**, 27-year-old Army man who set 46.20 pb this season... **DAVID MACKENZIE**... **JARED DEACON**.



Sitting pretty: Roger Black, Britain's leading 400m runner, relaxing at home before the Olympic trials in Birmingham this weekend

Photograph: Robert Hallam

The happiest of returns for the one-lap wonder

Guy Bullock and Mark Hyton have contributed to a run of six successive 400m titles, as evidence of a continuing tradition of success.

"Success breeds success," he added. "I also think our relay win in the '91 World Championships had a big impact. I think a lot of people will have thought: 'That looks like a lot of fun. I'll have a go at that.'

Guy Bullock and Mark Hyton have contributed to a run of six successive 400m titles, as evidence of a continuing tradition of success.

Michael Johnson runs 43.50. Enough said.

Black believes the 400m event has changed significantly in the last two or three years, becoming more sprint based. According to him, he has worked this winter at lowering his 400m best to 44.97 last Friday. Baulch and his fellow Welshman Iwan Thomas, who ran 44.66 at altitude in South Africa earlier this year, are the two runners Black is taking most notice of at the moment, despite Du'Aine Ladejo's prediction that he will win the final in a time around 44.80.

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"Every day, without fail, however hard the session, Jon would say: 'This is great.' He's just an inspiration. He makes you realise you have to make the most of this life. Because," he added with a chuckle – "the real world sucks, you know."

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8 playing the game

Report
by Paul Trow

For most people finding their feet in the game, the process of trying to join a golf club is about as pleasurable as having a tooth extracted.

Traditionally, men and women seeking club membership undergo a vetting process which lays bare their private lives and business dealings, as well as their golfing prowess, to the most intrusive scrutiny.

Throughout this ordeal, the impression is given that one word or gesture out of place is all it takes for your application to fail. Quite apart from the social stigma, rejection also means you are cast into golf's outer darkness of municipal driving ranges and pay-to-play courses.

There are, unfortunately, still too many instances of this scenario for golf to claim, truthfully, that it is a classless game. Channel 4's infamous *Cutting Edge* programme a few years ago gave a fly-on-the-wall insight at Northwood in Middlesex which confirmed many preconceptions about suburban golf clubs.

Of course, the hughes of Northwood were simply aping the small handful of clubs even further up the social ladder which regard themselves as existing exclusively for gentlemen.

However, any outsider who has been impudent enough to try to get a game at, for instance, Muirfield, occasional venue of the Open Championship, home to the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers and, by self-appointment, Britain's poshest club, will know what it feels like when you attempt to rub shoulders with such gentlemen.

Despite this harsh attitude towards the great unwashed in certain quarters, golf's popularity is growing and the accessibility of the game has never been greater.

In the first half of this decade alone, 476 new courses have opened to increase the total number of outlets in the British Isles by almost 30 per cent. A £1.5bn development boom was triggered in the late 1980s by *Demand for Golf*, a report from the Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, which called for 700 new courses to cater for people who wished to take up the game (and an extra 200,000 names have been registered with the English Golf Union since then).

Inevitably, many of the resulting projects ran into financial problems. Either they cost too much to build at a time when the recession was biting and interest rates were high, or they were too far from the big population centres.

In the case of the former, not enough people could afford the



On the green: it will cost you about £30,000 to join the London Club, but many other courses also charge by the round

joining fees, which at their highest exceeded £30,000. And the case of the latter, too many were located on set-aside farmland situated in obscure rural areas.

Ironically, this financial crisis has created a buyers' market for golf in Britain for the first time since the Second World War. The spectre of membership waiting lists, minimum handicap requirements and astronomical joining fees are demonstrably on the retreat.

"The new clubs are desperate for people to come and play their courses," said Colin Hegarty, the director of the Golf Research Group, which monitors golfing activity in the British Isles. "As many as 83 per cent of them are in financial danger and need more golfers, green-fee payers."

"Forty-five per cent of the adult population show an interest in golf, but only 5 per cent actually play the game. Nevertheless, the figure is still

means that more than two million people will venture on to a course or a driving range at least once a year."

This widespread interest in the game is in some ways a surprise. Despite the excitement generated by Europe's Ryder Cup triumph last September and Nick Faldo's dramatic eclipse of Greg Norman in the Masters, the circulation figures for Britain's four monthly golf magazines have dropped by almost a third over the last 18 months. And much of the tournament golf that used to appear regularly on terrestrial television has been banished to the inevitably smaller audiences serviced by satellite channels.

But while the media coverage may not currently appeal to golf's wider public, the game is set for a summer

of feverish activity with so many clubs competing to recruit people whose activities to date have been confined to playing at the local pitch-and-putt.

"The average subscription at the newer clubs is £466, a decline of 7 per cent on last year," Hegarty added. "And 36 per cent of new courses don't charge a joining fee for membership at all. Many of those who do pay a joining fee enjoy varying degrees of refundability and can invest in debentures as well."

Even though inflation is now almost as low as the England football team's goals-per-game average, many of the older clubs seem set in the milk-a-captive-audience mode,

routinely hiking subscriptions by up to 10 per cent.

Only an uprising of poll-tax proportions is likely to upset that status quo at golf's more established homes, but the time could come when some members vote with their feet and defect to clubs which offer better value.

For newcomers who have yet to commit themselves to a particular club it is a different story. "Green fees are also coming down," Hegarty said. "That gives players who don't belong to a club the opportunity to sample a variety of courses in their area. The consumer wants choice, not just over which club to join but whether to become a member at all or remain a green-fee player."

"More than half the people who play golf in this country do so fewer than 10 times a year. In those circumstances, it doesn't make financial sense to be a member of a club. Apart from the cost of taking up golf, the main deterrents for beginners and inexperienced players are the game's relative difficulty and the time it takes to play."

"In the first instance, it's important to receive tuition from a PGA professional. The time problem is easily solved if we overthrow the tyranny of the 18-hole round. There's no reason why we shouldn't play six or nine holes if we want to."

"Apart from rival clubs, courses now face competition from 600 driving ranges in Britain as well. Whatever anyone might say, the power definitely resides with the consumer at the moment."

One suspects that not too many of Muirfield's Honourable Company will visit their local driving range or join one of the newer clubs this summer, but that should mean more room for the rest of us.

10 dos and don'ts

You've finally cracked it. The secretary has written to confirm your application to join the club. But as a new member you are of probation, at least for your first 10 years. If you thought the interview was grueling, imagine how tough life will be now you are under the microscope of the entire membership. This checklist of dos and don'ts may at least help to ease the embarrassment of those first few sets.

1. Even if you're a rock star and have a clothing contract with av-Strauss, under no circumstances should you wear jeans. If you're in France, though, you will probably be allowed to play unless you are in jeans.

2. Never wear trainers. They are too comfortable. Spiked golf shoes that make your feet sore on hard ground are de rigueur, although some courses now favour leather soles which are gentler on the greens.

3. Never wear ankle-length socks if you are in shorts. The socks should go up to your knees, and your shirt should go down to your knees. You're not there for a sunbathe.

4. Never tuck your trousers inside your socks when the ground is muddy. This deprives the pit of an opportunity to sell you one of those ridiculous Plus-Fours he's had a stock since Roger Davis made them briefly fashionable in the 1970s.

5. Always have your own bag of clubs. Sharing clubs is strictly not allowed. It's also a bit silly one of you is left-handed.

6. Never leave your bag on the green when putting. Never leave it in front of the green or on the wrong side either, otherwise the train-playing behind you will give a ready-made excuse for missing his next shot. You will be blamed.

7. Never use a motorised buggy. Even if the temperature is pushing 50C unless you can prove you are the victim of a heat condition. Check first that your doctor isn't a member of the club.

8. Always read the club notice board at every opportunity because the committee have rewritten the rules of golf overnight.

9. Always address everybody with deference regardless of their rank. In some clubs, the chairman of the greens committee deserves to sound a more authoritative barks. He still gets to be treated like a god, though when he returns to the clubhouse.

SO YOU WANT TO... JOIN A GOLF CLUB

Photograph: Adam Scott

Maswell Hill, North London

Opened: 1892
Owned by: Membership
Membership: 570
Waiting list: Three months to get in, usually starting with a five-day membership
Joining fee: £1,050
Annual subscription: £550
Green fees: £25 a round, £30 a day
Facilities: 27 holes, a 50-bedroom hotel, 17-bay floodlit driving range, and a leisure complex to be completed next year

Established: 1892
Owned by: Hotel group
Membership: nearly 800
Waiting list: 120, could be as long as two years
Joining fee: £440
Annual subscription: £220
Green fees: £23 a round, £30 a day
Facilities: 18-hole course

Bartington, West Lothian, Scotland

Opened: 1892
Owned by: Membership
Membership: nearly 800
Waiting list: 120, could be as long as two years
Joining fee: £440
Annual subscription: £220
Green fees: £25 a round, £30 a day
Facilities: 18-hole course

Caryton Bay, St Albans, Hertfordshire

Opened: 1926
Owned by: Hotel group
Membership: 550
Waiting list: 15, delay no more than six months
Joining fee: £320 plus VAT
Annual subscription: £200 plus VAT
Green fees: £25 a round
Facilities: 18-hole course, adjoining four-star hotel

The London, near Branksome Hatch

Opened: 1932
Owned by: Private company
Membership: 350
Waiting list: None
Joining fee: £20,000 (share in the onus), plus £2,000 (debt), plus £4,000 pin-up fee, plus VAT
Annual subscription: £1,350 plus VAT
Green fees: None (members/guests)
Facilities: Two Jack Nicklaus-designed hole courses; luxury club house including sunken Japanese bath. Plans to build a course (an 18-hole pay and play)

Royal Porthcawl, Mid Glamorgan

Opened: 1891
Owned by: Membership
Membership: 800
Waiting list: None (membership granted by invitation only)
Joining fee: Double the annual subscription
Annual subscription: A private matter between the club and its members
Green fees: £45 a day, £50 at weekends (very restricted)
Facilities: One 18-hole course which has staged five Amateur Championships and last year's Walker Cup

Forest Pines, Lincolnshire

Opened: 18-hole course designed by John Morgan opens next week
Owned by: Private company
Membership: Halfway to target of 450
Waiting list: None
Joining fee: £750 plus VAT
Annual subscription: £550 plus VAT
Green fees: £25 a round, £30 a day
Facilities: 27 holes, a 50-bedroom hotel, 17-bay floodlit driving range, and a leisure complex to be completed next year

Openings, Lancashire

Opened: 1892
Owned by: Membership
Membership: 570
Waiting list: Three months to get in, usually starting with a five-day membership
Joining fee: £1,050
Annual subscription: £550
Green fees: £23 a round, £30 a day
Facilities: 27 holes, a 50-bedroom hotel, 17-bay floodlit driving range, and a leisure complex to be completed next year

Cricklade, Wiltshire, England

Opened: 1892
Owned by: Membership
Membership: 800
Waiting list: 120, could be as long as two years
Joining fee: £440
Annual subscription: £220
Green fees: £25 a round, £30 a day
Facilities: 18-hole course

Cricket: Tuesday, Third Women's one-day international: England v Northern Ireland

England's one-day international team will play their first match of the season against Northern Ireland at the Oval on Tuesday 18 June.

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Lord's the perfect place for 'Dickie' to bid adieu

The nation's favourite – and best – umpire will draw stumps on a unique 27-year career after the second Test against India next week. Derek Pringle talked to him

If the people at Disney ever feel the urge to create a cartoon character from cricket, they need look no further than Test umpire Harold Dennis "Dickie" Bird. With his trademark flat white hat and a whole repertoire of idiosyncrasies and quirches, he is more famous than all but a handful of Test cricketers, playing that, for the chosen few, game and vocation can still find you after 40.

Mind you, the animators will have to hurry if they want to catch him live in all his splendour. After domining said white cap and coat for 66 Tests, 95 one-day internationals – including three World Cup finals – and 27 years of hairline adjudication, His Dickeness is about to hang them up, and retire from the international arena.

He will be 64 next birthday and feels the younger umpires ought to be given chance in what he believes is an increasingly arduous but better paid job. Still umpiring well – he came third last year on marks given by county captains – he decided some time ago that next week's Test at Lord's would be his last, though he plans to carry on at county level or another season.

"It's going to be something special though," said Bird, whose package for his first Test in 1973 came to £25 – the current fee is £2,200. "There is nothing to compare with Lord's Test match fee. And when I walk down the steps into the umpires' room, down through the Long Room and out onto the grass, it will be a very emotional occasion for me, and I think I'll shed a few tears."

Well, we'll see all. It is a sad fact of this era of standardisation that charters who can combine a high level of skill with the propensity for it, are increasingly rare. Even us players, who have cursed and spurned disbelief at rejected tests, witness him, in spite of the constant stream of "Not outs" that have emanated over the years from this haest of umpires to impress when pips are struck.

In fact, Dickie's mere presence in a county match seems to bring on a bout of irrational behaviour among seam twirlers. After a career of trying to connive and jostle for the down, wind-assisted end, they are suddenly happy to take on gales and Eiger-like slopes just to be away from him: the belief that any inquiries for us are far more likely to be answered in the affirmative by the on-umpire.

"People say I'm a 'not outer'. Well, I probably have been hard on them. But one thing I've always tried to be is consistent to both teams. In any case I was involved in a Test out in Spain, between the West Indies and

dies and Pakistan, where there were 17 lbws in the match. That's a world record, though, of course, I didn't give them all," he smirked with a knowing glint of a man unlikely to go out in a haze of leg-befores.

The fledgling Bird, who went to the local secondary modern in Barnsley, and played a lot of football as well as cricket, was far less cautious, he assures you. "My big mate was Tommy Taylor, who died in the Munich air disaster. I played inside-right with him at school and did well enough to be approached by Sheffield Wednesday and one or two other First Division clubs."

However, nothing came of football, so he played cricket for Yorkshire instead, joining them in 1956 when they closely shadowed Surrey as the most dominant county force in the land.

As an opening batsman, he admits to being something of a struggle and a regular berth for his native county eluded him. Undeterred, he left and joined Leicestershire in 1959. The move was prompted when he was dropped following an unbeaten

181 against Glamorgan – his highest first-class score – on a raging turner at Bradford Park Avenue.

"There was a selection committee of 39 there that game, and I remember Brian Sellers coming into the dressing-room and saying, 'Well played Birdy, but get thee head down, that's in second team next match.'

We've dropped thee. Mind you, I wouldn't have minded so much if it had been a flat pitch."

He retired in 1964, but did not apply to become an umpire until 1969. A spell of coaching at Plymouth College sustained him until JJ Watt, the former Middlesex and England fast bowler, suggested he apply for the umpires' list.

"At the time I thought 'you must be joking. Umpiring that's the worst job in the world'. But I gave it some thought and when some of my old mates at Yorkshire reckoned it were probably the next best thing to playing, I applied."

"My first game was Yorkshire v Surrey at the Oval in 1970. I was so nervous I arrived at a quarter to six in the morning, so as not to be late. Of course the gates were shut, so I had some explaining to do when a London Bobby caught me trying to climb in."

It is not the only time he has been the early bird: he arrived four hours early at Buckingham Palace to have lunch with the Queen and receive an MBE – an event, he says, was the best day of his life.

Keith Fletcher, Essex's godfather and guru, reckons Bird is easily the best and most consistent Test umpire

he's seen and tougher than he makes out. The impression of being frail and downtrodden with worry is simply a myth.

Certainly, he has never run away from the issue of intimidatory bowling.

Many will remember the blazing rows over excessive use of the bouncer with Clive Lloyd at Edgbaston in 1984 and Andy Roberts,

when he was coaching the West Indies, at Old Trafford last year. But in this controversial area that continues to blight the game, he has never

been publicly backed by the Test and County Cricket Board.

Apart from two holidays a year at the Livermead Cliff hotel, where he likes to break fast every morning on kippers, he relaxes, he claims, by working. He doesn't mind criticism, and as long as people get their facts right he accepts it as part of the traditional banter that goes on in the pub afterwards.

"With all the money coming into the game, the need for the perfect decision is growing, though I don't

like the mass appealing that has crept in with it. There is no doubt that the use of electronic aids for line decisions has been a tremendous help.

I can see it being used soon for low catches [like Graeme Hick's scooped catch at slip to dismiss Vikram Rathore at Edgbaston] but not for other decisions."

He has seen more of the modern greats from closer quarters than most, rating Dennis Lillee's 5 for 15 and John Edrich's 37 on a treacherous rain-affected pitch at Edgbaston as the best bowlers.

"When I started I thought umpiring was giving them in, or giving them out. All that's changed and although after Lord's I'll miss the buzz of the Test matches, I'll miss those bloomin' matthes tables."

Restoring Yorkshire to a bed of roses

THE WEEK AHEAD

Bitter years of empty promise have taught those whose hearts beat for Yorkshire cricket to view even the most optimistic circumstances warily. Ask whether, at last, a revival of substance is under way and the majority would probably prefer to reserve judgement.

These would almost certainly include their new captain, the re-doubtable David Byas, who is fast restoring the stereotypical image of his breed to its full former glory. A ruddy-cheeked farming man, he is not one to waste words, especially on matters of mere speculation.

Not that he is without opinion; simply sparing in the way he presents it. "I have maintained from the start that we can beat anybody, if we consistently produce our best form," he said after Monday's defeat of Surrey had lifted his side to the top of the County Championship table.

If he did not add: "...and I think this year we can win the title." It is because in the light of the first statement, his belief in the second, he would argue, should be blindingly obvious.

Byas is bluff, gruff in the best Yorkshire tradition: or the worst, depending on your view. To some he may appear as rather curt and dismissive, almost disdainful. To others, however, in his silence lies his strength.

And this strength is fundamental, providing at last a clear focal point to the county's ambitions. Yorkshire have gone back to basics in methodology, dispensing with their manager and investing unlimited authority in their 32-year-old captain. Byas has the experience, the character and the sureness of thought to be revered by the young academy boys, who hold the key to the county's future. Others must be reassured to know precisely where they stand.

So far, so good. Top spot in the Championship, a semi-final in the Benson and Hedges Cup and a handy position in the Sunday League to boot. And what form those youngsters have shown. The fledgling openers, Michael Vaughan and Anthony McGrath, 21 and 20 respectively, overflow with promise. Chris Silverwood, the 21-year-old seam bowler, looks a prospect, too.

Meanwhile, Michael Bevan, an Australian curiously blessed with Yorkshire manners, has more than 800 Championship runs. Craig White, the Anglo-Aussie whom Raymond Illingworth held in such regard, has been fully rehabilitated. Even Darren Gough, after a troubled year, is showing signs of a return to his best.

The authenticity of Yorkshire's current form, Byas maintains, will be proved not by six Championship matches but by 17. Nevertheless, it is difficult to suppress entirely the excitement tickling their supporters' calm. Nor to deny the next few days will answer some questions, if not all.

Once the confrontation with Lancashire in the Bensons is out of the way, Byas's team face the incumbent champions, Warwickshire, over four days in Leeds, starting tomorrow. It is as good a test of their credentials as they could face at this stage.

There will be no Nick Knight for Dermot Reeve to pick, the England player having again broken a finger.

Tim Munton and Gladstone Small remain injured but the depth of the Warwickshire squad is enough to accommodate such inconveniences. Their hunger, too, shows no sign of diminishing, sharpened, even, by the defeat of previously unbeaten Somerset in the last round, which put them only 11 points off the pace.

But the keenness of competition at Headingley will be matched at Canterbury, where Kent, who lost pole position in a fairly tame draw at Leicestershire, take on a Middlesex team seeking a third Championship win in a row.

Jon Culley



Natural habitat: Dickie Bird at home in charge of a Northants 2nd XI match at Milton Keynes this week

Photograph: Robert Hallam

The player who shows most independence, who rails at those in authority, is the one most likely to be leadership material

CORRECTION. This column, in common with others, may occasionally have given the impression that the England cricket selectors were not outstandingly good at their job. It may even have suggested that the chairman of said selectors, Mr Raymond Illingworth, was somewhat out of touch and lacking in man-management skills. There is, as we now see, not the slightest truth in these allegations, which we unreservedly withdraw.

Credit where it's due. England were very good at Edgbaston, and the selectors played a blinder. Having got almost everything right in the one-day internationals, they could have done the obvious thing and stuck with the same players. Instead they dispensed with more than half the squad: not just Neil Smith and Mark Ealham, but Ally Brown, Matthew Maynard, Alec Stewart and Darren Gough, and used the vacancies to open the pipeline from

the A team. There were promotions for Ronnie Irani and Min Patel, and recalls for Nick Knight and, above all, last winter's England A captain Nasser Hussain.

Hussain could easily have been ignored on the grounds that he did not have enough runs this season: 351 at an average of 32 when the squad was picked. Once in the squad he could easily have been the batsman to miss out, since John Crawley was the resident No3 when he was injured in Durban last December. It cannot have been much fun for Mike Atherton and David Lloyd to tell their mate Crawley that he had again been unlucky. They took the unusual step of informing Hussain last Tuesday that he would bat at three, whatever the other permutations.

They also told the press, most of whom then made Hussain their story on Wednesday morning. This could have backfired, and perhaps it did briefly – it's hard to find another reason why this excellent fielder's first contribution to the match should have been to drop a sitter at cover.

But the benefits outweighed the dangers. What the management were saying, loud and clear, was the thing all managements, in sport or outside, ought to say more often than they do: we believe in you.

Atherton had made the same point another way two weeks earlier, ringing Hussain to tell him that although he was not in the one-day squad, he was in the selectors' thoughts. By such little bits of consideration are careers revived.

On this Edgbaston pitch no batsman could survive for long without luck, unless his name was Sachin.

But you have to make use of your good fortune and Hussain added another hundred runs after getting

of the selectors to pick Hussain for this Test, but it was even more so to make him captain of the A team last September. This appears to have been a late decision: Alan Wells revealed this weekend that he had a call from Illingworth checking whether, if he didn't make the senior party, he would be happy to resume at the helm of the junior one. But it had been noted that Hussain made a fine start as vice-captain of Essex, and the selectors overlooked the fact that his career was littered with bust-ups and tantrums.

This was a real step forward. If there's one thing cricket administrators hate, it's temperamental young players. Mark Ramprakash, Hussain's friend and fellow firecracker, was unofficially suspended by England for a year after some little local difficulties at Middlesex. Hussain showed dissent in both his first two innings for England, in St

Kitts in 1990, and was given a fearsome dressing-down by Graham Gooch. This may have had something to do with the fact that Gooch's successor as captain of Essex was Paul Prichard.

On tour with England A, Hussain received nothing but praise. "He was immensely mature in his leadership," said tour manager Mike Vockins – the Rev Mike Vockins, that is. Team manager John Emburey went further: "If Mike Atherton was to get ill or injured, Hussain could be a very good replacement." This was said in December, and seemed far-fetched. Now, when the only other possible captain in the team is Jack Russell, it looks eminently sensible.

Another remark of Vockins's caught the eye. "I knew of his reputation," he recalled. "He was said to be a close-run thing between Ramprakash and Phil Tufnell.

might worry about in a captain." This is the orthodox thinking. And it is wrong.

Hussain is not the only example in cricket of a rebel turned leader. Ray Illingworth himself was a pretty obstreperous England captain, while Atherton looked like a model citizen, captain of Cambridge and all that, but soon turned out to have a streak of cussedness. Football has thrown up more examples, from Graeme Souness to Dennis Wise. You might call it Cantona's Law: the players who show most independence, who rail at the often petty manoeuvrings of those in authority over him, is the one most likely to be leadership material.

Assuming that Hussain has now made the Test grade, the selectors will have to look elsewhere for the next A team captain. It should be a close-run thing between Ramprakash and Phil Tufnell.



TIM DE LISLE

generous reprieve from umpire Hair. (Friday was a bad Hair day; Saturday was an even worse one.) Exactly half of Hussain's 128 were made in company with the debutant tailenders, Patel and Mullally. He had said that he was looking forward to batting higher than No6 for the first time; the way things turned out, there wasn't a lot of difference.

Marshalling the tail requires leadership as well as skill. It was clever

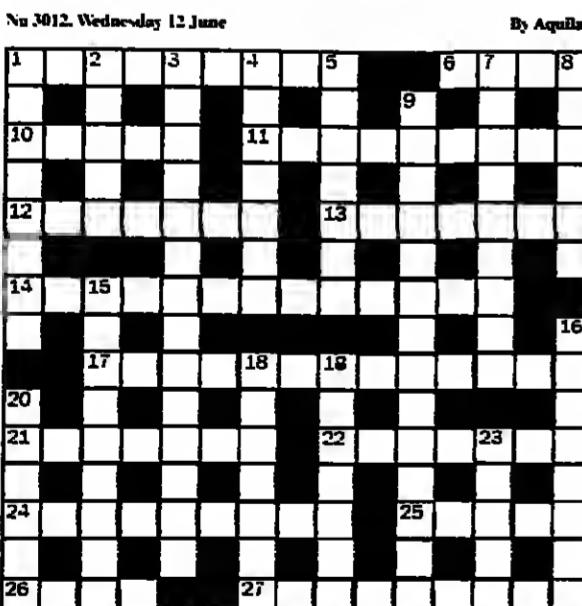
speak up
or swearin
Stan Apperley



Above: a group of Dutch supporters find their rhythm during the half-time break of the game against Scotland
Below: the referee Joe Cortez leads the bloodied figure of the legendary Mexican Julio Cesar Chavez to the doctor in the fourth round of his fight against Oscar De La Hoya in Las Vegas. The fight was stopped later in the same round, with De La Hoya acclaimed as the best Hispanic fighter in the world

Photograph: David Ashdown
Photograph: Reuter

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD



No 3012, Wednesday 12 June
By Aquila

Tuesday's Solution

CARMINE	CAMPISH
A E N	O E C O
CASE STUDY	E X E A T
H E O	N B S
S H O O	D A M S C I N S
L V Y	I A P A
A N I I I	R E V E R S I G L I C H T
S M I G H T H A V E D E E N S	A
E W	N U G E I
T E A C L O U N S	B A T E N
F A T	B
Y E A R M	P I F F O S B U
S R G	S
T H Y R O I D	P I D D L E D

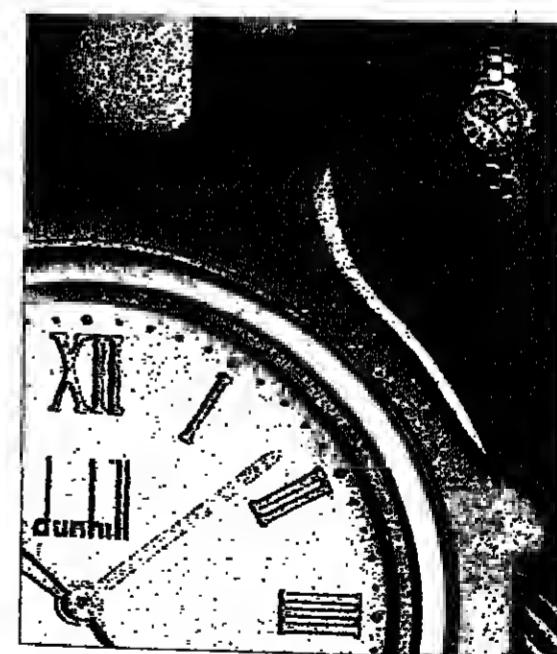
- ACROSS
 1 Entertainer ruffed in Morse, reportedly (3,6)
 6 Enormous clasp, easy to open (4)
 10 Stud often seen in Hull? (5)
 11 Source of light's gone to hell, using parasols (9)
 12 The French following lorry in Reading, say (7)
 13 One who trains police-dog or boar (7)
 14 Exhausted from old-fashioned standing (3,2,4,4)
 17 Men's auditions going badly (more than one fell here) (13)
 21 Pen, the main port of Wales? (7)
 22 American writer finding God, close to water (7)
 24 Removal of this paper may make people cry (3,4)
- DOWN
 25 Adaptation of Verdi's Force of Destiny? (15)
 26 Drink for kids (4)
 27 Reviving Roman thing with top priority (9)
 1 Ripped up new road, like Escamilla (8)
 2 Focal-point of tea-maker about four (5)
 3 Vatican nun lost, sadly — not fitting after such treatment? (14)
 4 Channel Islands' duck in a tank (7)
 5 Local offices not opening for American spreads (7)
 7 Neal stringed instrument ruined on the outside (9)
 8 Protect from scolding (biting head off) (6)
 9 Rotten swindler chosen as a weak, upper-class type (8,6)



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